TRAINING THAT IGNITES PASTORAL COUNSELING

A THESIS-PROJECT

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To my faithful wife, Julie.

Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis-project describes how training ignites pastoral counseling, as pastors were trained on seven pastoral counseling principles. It demonstrates that due to a lack of training, pastors are not prepared to do pastoral counseling and therefore, may not be spending sufficient time providing pastoral counseling. The contents develop a theological foundation for pastoral counseling and include a review of literature on the pastor's role and counseling process. The thesis-project is applied at Colonial Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. It includes an anonymous pre-training and post-training survey and a post-training focus group to measure the effectiveness of this training.

CHAPTER ONE

LACK OF TRAINING LIMITS COUNSELING

Introduction

Do pastors limit the amount of time they spend counseling others? Do they not feel equipped to counsel people, given they took only one, or a few, counseling classes in seminary? Maybe, as will be addressed in this chapter, pastors have not adopted a pastoral counseling process which is easy to follow and is effective, so therefore they find themselves referring congregants to professional counselors outside their church, more than they attempt to help them by counseling them. Maybe, as will be addressed in Chapter 2, pastors are not aware that pastoral care and counseling is one of the three major functions of their pastoral role. Pastors need to do the proper amount of pastoral counseling, as opposed to being afraid of it, so doing far too little, or believing the lie that only pastors can counsel people and therefore doing too much or too many sessions with one person. This doctoral research concerning a pastoral training guide can help motivate pastors to allocate more of their pastoral work time toward pastoral counseling, as they learn to be more effective in, and understand the importance of, doing pastoral counseling.

Before exploring this topic further, we need God's help. Let us start by praying first since we want God to guide us on this journey. Let us pray. God, we want to bring glory to you through our pastoral counseling. God, help pastors to see the importance of counseling others in their pastoral role. Also, lead and guide pastors, God, to discover and implement an easy and

effective pastoral counseling process to use in their ministry as they counsel others, if they currently do not have one. We pray all these things in your name. Amen.

My Personal Experience

I recently completed my pastoral care and counseling residency toward my doctoral degree. During this residency, I found myself reflecting on several of the conversations I have had with other pastors over the past last twenty-nine years of full-time ministry. These past conversations have centered around a pastor sharing with me how and what he or she planned to share when counseling a person who asked for help. In this conversation, the pastor would often turn to me and ask me what I would say and how I would I counsel this person. Often, this pastor had already asked another pastor for their thoughts before they asked me, and in doing so, the pastor had received yet another set of different pastoral counseling tips to help this person. Additionally, I recalled several cases where I, too, have asked other pastors how to counsel a person noting that their responses both in terms of what they would say and the process they would take the counselee through while helping them varied greatly.

I serve as one of seven pastors on staff at a large two-site Evangelical Presbyterian Church, named Colonial Presbyterian Church. Our church is in the Kansas City metropolitan area. My doctoral degree had me complete coursework in the three main areas of pastoral ministry: preaching/teaching, leadership, and pastoral care/counseling. There is a difference between pastoral counseling and counseling. “The importance of pastoral care and counseling

is grounded in the centrality of the proclamation of the Word of God in Christian ministry."[1] "Understood in this way, pastoral care and counseling are legitimate parts of Christian ministry because they provide a unique opportunity for God's Word to be spoken to the specific life experiences of the person seeking pastoral help."[2] So, counseling that is not pastoral, does not require that God's Word is spoken to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help. Now that these terms are clarified, let us continue. When I asked the Dean of my doctoral program, Dr. David Currie, why my degree focuses on these three areas, he stated that Dr. Kenneth Swetland, one of his mentors, thought that these are the three main functions of pastoral ministry. My observation of our church's pastoral team is everyone is focused on preaching/teaching, and leading our ministries, as well as performing the necessary pastoral care/counseling that comes our way. Of these three main functions, however, my hunch is that less than a third of our pastoral team's time is focused on pastoral care/counseling. Why? Please do not get me wrong here. When a congregant comes to one of our pastors for counseling, or when a member of the pastoral teams sees an obvious need for counseling, they do it. The question arises as to whether our pastoral team is being intentional, striving with God's help to spend a third of our time doing pastoral care and counseling with congregants. This is a major function of our role as pastors.

Pastors not intentionally exercising pastoral counseling in their role could be because they may not be aware that pastoral care and counseling is one of the three major functions

1. David C. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 9.

2. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 10.

and expectation of their pastoral role. It is also possible that pastors are not performing pastoral counseling in their role because they may not feel equipped to counsel people. The educational offerings and/or counseling classes taken in seminary may have been limited and, therefore, an easy-to-follow and effective pastoral counseling process may not have been adopted by pastors for helping counselees. Instead of having a counseling process, some pastors may be "winging it" with the different people they counsel. Or maybe, because some pastors do not have a pastoral counseling process, they may quickly refer people to professional counselors outside the church, rather than attempting to help them by assuming a counselor role. David Benner stated,

> Ministers are the only counseling professionals who routinely have training in systematic theology, biblical studies, ethics, and church history, and this framework of understanding gives pastoral counselors an invaluable perspective on those seeking their help. What a shame, therefore, when ministers abandon this perspective for a psychological one, judging the latter to be superior or more prestigious.[3]

Like Brian Childs mentioned, referring congregants is sometimes needed, when he stated: "The problem presented by the client is so complex or so far out of the experience and expertise of the pastor that adequate counseling would be difficult".[4] This is especially true with difficult cases as some congregants will bring issues that only those trained in psychotherapy should be handling, for example, working on changing underlying personality issues, or deep-seated conflicts. A couple of years ago the pastoral team and church leaders at the church I serve worked diligently to interview and prepare a referral list of Christian counselors in our area. The referral list has been heavily utilized by our pastors since it was created and that can make one

3. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 31-32.

4. Brian H. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide (*Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 86.

wonder if my church's pastoral team is doing due diligence in our pastoral counseling.

Need for Pastoral Counseling Process

People Approach Pastors for Help

Pastors need to be prepared with a counseling process, to take people through, when congregants come to them for counseling with their personal problems. According to the following research study, people are turning to pastors, more than any other helping profession, to get help for their issues. Are pastors prepared and ready?

> In an important and now quite well-known study conducted in 1957, 42 percent of Americans reported that when facing a significant personal problem, a minister is the first person they would consult when seeking help. A family physician was preferred by 29 percent of the sample (Gurin, Verhoff, and Feld 1960). When this study was replicated in 1976, ministers were still the most preferred group of helpers, chosen by 39 percent of the people (Verhoff, Kukla, and Dorran 1981). The second most popular professional group at this time was psychologists and psychiatrists, who were chosen by 29 percent of the sample. Nonpsychiatric physicians dropped to third place, being the first choice of 21 percent of the people.
>
> These statistics demonstrate that in spite of what often seems to be a diminishing sphere of influence for the church in society, a considerably higher percentage of people go to the clergy for help with personal problems than to any other helping profession. And they make this choice because of the clergy's role as representatives of the Christian church who bring both a Christian perspective and unique Christian healing resources to their work as counselors.[5]

Also, Brian Childs states,

> Though there are a plethora of mental health practitioners available to most people, particularly those who live in or near large metropolitan areas, people still go to pastors. Just as important, pastors have an entre to people that most mental health professionals do not have. Masters and Johnson tell us that 70 percent of all the people

5. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 33-34.

> who consulted their foundation had at one time or another also consulted a minister about their problem. While I think this is a surprisingly high percentage of people underscores a point. People go to pastors for help.[6]

Pastoral Counseling Helps Meet People's Needs

In addition to people turning to pastors for help, "pastoral care and counseling are among the most effective instruments by which churches stay relevant to changing human needs in our rapidly changing society and churches."[7] Having a well-defined pastoral counseling process, helps pastors counsel more efficiently and effectively and this in turn and helps churches stay germane to their community by meeting more of peoples' needs.

Pastors are Experts

Kollar discusses the pastor's role when he states, "It seems to me, however, that pastors often see themselves as capable only of assisting a person with salvation and engaging him in training and discipleship. After all, serious problems must be entrusted to an expert. How have we become convinced of this?"[8] Kollar also states,

> Of course, it is true that a pastor is an inadequate counselor—if he *must* be an expert on emotional problems to be effective. But must a counselor be an expert? The apostle Paul wrote that God is already at work in the counselee (2 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). He is a letter from Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God, not on a tablet of stone but on a tablet of a human heart (2 Corinthians 3:3).[9]

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6. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 19-20.

7. Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth (*Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 2.

8. Kollar, Charles Allen, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach For Getting People Back on Track* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 21.

9. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 21-22.

Although most pastors are not counseling experts, they are experts at seeing how the Holy Spirit is at work in an individual and they speak God's Word to the specific situation of the counselee.

Defining Pastoral Counseling

When discussing pastoral counseling, it is often helpful to start with defining what pastoral counseling is, since there are many types of counseling resources today. Wayne Oates writes, "…that person's counseling becomes pastoral when the counselee or the counselor focuses the relationship upon the relation of God to the process of their lives."[10] To add to this definition, Benner writes, "Pastoral counseling involves the establishment of a time-limited relationship that is structured to provide comfort for the troubled persons by enhancing their awareness of God's grace and faithful presence and thereby increasing their ability to live their lives more fully in the light of these realizations."[11] One can ascertain then that during pastoral counseling the pastor works diligently to connect God to the counselee's life.

This research project is intended to demonstrate that pastors need to have a pastoral counseling process. Not only does the counseling process help guide pastors to be more efficient and effective when counseling others but additionally, when this counseling process is communicated to the congregation, it benefits the congregants as well. This allows the congregants to know how their pastors may help them by understanding what the counseling

10. Wayne E. Oates, *Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1974), 11.

11. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

process will be. This will then allow them to be more informed as they compare it to what they may receive as support from a counselor outside the church.

Eight Elements of Pastoral Counseling Process

Do pastors have a cohesive pastoral counseling process to use when counseling congregants? And if there are multiple pastors on a church's pastoral team, does the pastoral team have a similar process for counseling congregants? Each pastor does not have to invent from scratch a pastoral counseling process for himself or herself, as one already exists and is ready for them to apply it in their daily work. There are eight elements to an effective counseling process. Before reviewing the eight elements, the following caution is in order. "As is true of using any caregiving model, it should be applied flexibly using only the procedures that seem relevant to the flow of helping relationships with particular counselees."[12] The question pastors need to ask themselves now is does the counseling process they use contain the following eight elements?

In this section, each of these eight elements will be briefly explained and more detail of these eight elements will be provided in Chapter 4, which contains the training for pastoral counseling. The primary source for the pastoral counseling process is David Benner, with additional supplements. David Benner's book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model,* has been a standard text used in pastoral counseling classes today. This book was published in 2003. The fact that this book is still in print for Baker Academic Publishing, is because it is selling. On Amazon, this book ranks as #81 best seller in Christian counseling books

12. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,*125.

and for a nineteen-year-old edition, this is impressive. This book is selling because it is a very practical and effective short-term counseling resource which works well for pastors who counsel others, given all the responsibilities of the pastorate. Benner provides the busy pastor with a workable, short-term counseling model consisting of five one-hour sessions. This book not only provides the pastor with the tools necessary to counsel effectively but also assists with the counseling process occurring in a timely manner.

1. Intake Meeting Where Counselee Describes Problem

The pastoral counselor begins the diagnostic or evaluation interview. "One of the best ways of doing this is a process family therapists call 'joining'. Joining makes explicit the implicit similarities of experience between the counselor and the counselee."[13] "There is usually something we have in common with most people who enter our office if only the same neighborhood, geographic origin, ethnicity, education, or interests."[14] "This encourages burdened people to express and talk through their feelings and share salient facts about their situation."[15]

Once joining has finished, then the pastor asks a question like: What brings you in today that you would like to share with me? A pastor counselor asks the counselee this question so the counselee can share their one main presenting problem with the pastor. During this intake meeting, the pastor will also ask the counselee what they hope to accomplish, and

13. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 60.

14. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 60.

15. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 123.

what they are hoping that the pastor specifically can help with, and what he or she has accomplished on his or her own efforts so far. This is also a good time for the pastor to let the counselee know what he or she will experience in terms of help, so sharing the pastoral counseling process during this first meeting is a great way to relay this information.

2. Maximum of Five One-Hour Sessions

Second, pastoral counseling must be brief and time limited. The counseling process, addressing the one presenting problem, is completed in a maximum of five sessions. Research shows "that 87 percent of the pastoral counseling conducted by pastors in general ministry involves five or fewer sessions."[16] Benner explains that given there are a maximum of five sessions, the pastor needs to help the congregant focus on working on the one main presenting problem.

3. Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements

Third, pastoral counseling must be holistic where the pastor focuses on the congregant's affective (feeling), cognitive (thought), and behavioral (action) elements of functioning. Pastoral counseling is different from other counseling, where during the other counseling, the counselor focuses on only one, or a couple, of these elements. For example, a cognitive therapist will focus on the counselee's thought, whereas a behavioral therapist will focus on the counselee's

16. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 48.

action. The pastor counselor focuses on all three of these elements so that he or she can have a more complete assessment and effective intervention.[17]

4. Counseling is Structured

Fourth, pastoral counseling must be structured. "The counselor evaluates the counselee's progress."[18] The general structural pattern for the counseling sessions is during the first three or four sessions, the pastor will explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with their one main presenting problem, as well as brainstorm and explore with the congregant some possible changes in counselee's life that might help with addressing or coping with his or her presenting problem. During the last session or two, the pastor and congregant will discuss the progress they have made in addressing the congregant's presenting problem, and share what remains to be addressed, and decide if a referral is needed. They will then bring closure to the counseling relationship at the close of the fifth session.

5. Homework Given Between Sessions

Fifth, pastoral counseling must be homework based. Assigning homework to the congregant between the sessions helps keep the momentum moving forward as the pastor and the congregant work together on her or his presenting problem. Having the congregant read

17. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 56.

18. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling,* 179.

books and articles that are focused on understanding and addressing the congregant's presenting problem can be a great way to provide help. Reading and studying specific Bible verses or passages can be another excellent homework resource, as it can help heal and guide the congregant. Devotional and inspirational literature is another outstanding homework possibility that can help bring perspective and healing to the congregant. Journaling is an exceptional possibility for the congregant to reflect on their experience and the progress being made in addressing their issue.

6. Pastoral Counseling is Church Based

Sixth, pastoral counseling must be church based. The congregation and the leadership must understand and affirm the pastors' counseling is an important part of the work of the church. The church needs to offer support groups for different issues congregants may be struggling with, for example, addiction, divorce, retirement, abuse, bereavement, health issues, parenting, martial communication, job transitions, etc. so that those who are undergoing pastoral counseling, will have the opportunity to move into a support group for portions of the help they need. Also, it may be helpful to connect a congregant in counseling with another person in the church who may be able to provide some of the help the congregant's needs.[19]

7. Pastoral Counseling is Spiritually Focused

19. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 60-61.

Seventh, pastoral counseling must be spiritually focused. In other words, the focus is on the congregant in relationship with God. To be human is to be a spiritual being. The pastoral counselor needs to be aware of the congregant's spiritual response to their issue, in other words, does he or she have faith in God to help them with addressing and be healed from their issue?[20]

8. Pastoral Counseling is Explicitly Christian

Eighth, pastoral counseling must be explicitly Christian counseling. Anyone seeking help from a pastoral counselor must understand that the pastor is committed to the belief that wholeness cannot be found apart from a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Christian counseling uses prayer, scripture, and the sacraments to bring the congregant more in touch with God, who is the source of all life, growth, and healing. God is the one who heals counselees.

If a pastor does not have a pastoral counseling process which he or she uses when counseling congregants—or perhaps the counseling process does not contain the following eight elements just shared—then this training may help the pastor and the congregation. If this is the case, continue reading and prayerfully consider integrating the information contained within this training into the pastoral counseling ministry.

Challenges

20. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling*, 63-67.

Many pastors are challenged when they offer pastoral counseling as they lack confidence in their pastoral counseling ability. Why? Next are three possible explanations for this. The first explanation is that most pastors have insufficient pastoral counseling training. Many pastors may have taken only one or two pastoral counseling courses when attaining their seminary degree. Given the few counseling courses taken, have pastors learned and adopted a counseling process, or are they just "winging it" when counseling people?

The second explanation is that pastors are very busy providing all aspects of ministry and they may tend to give less focus of their time to pastoral counseling. The more visible parts of the pastor's role, like preaching/teaching and leading ministries tend to get more of the pastor's attention, and the less visible parts, like pastoral counseling, do not. Therefore, pastors become more proficient at the functions of their job which they do most. However, pastors try to help those that request help.

The third explanation is pastors may refer others they are counseling too quickly. Many pastors have prepared a list, and have frequently utilized it, of Christian counselors in their area to which they can refer congregants. Given this, one can wonder if pastors are doing due diligence in their pastor counseling role. Pastors may be too quickly referring congregants to professional counselors, as they do not feel equipped to help them.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis is due to a lack of training, and not having an easy and effective pastoral counseling process, pastors do not feel adequately prepared to do efficient and effective pastoral counseling and therefore, they may not be spending an adequate amount of time

providing pastoral counseling to help their congregants. This study will show that if pastors complete this training and adopt the elements of the pastoral counseling process, their pastoral counseling confidence will increase, resulting in their willingness to do more pastoral counseling. This will help them live more fully into their complete role as pastor.

Project Design

To test the validity of this hypothesis, research will be used, consisting of the Pre-Training Survey, then pastoral counseling training facilitated by me, followed by the Post-Training Survey.[21] Lastly, a focus group will be facilitated by me using a focus group questionnaire. The hypothesis is that due to a lack of training, and not having an easy and effective pastoral counseling process, pastors do not feel adequately prepared to do efficient and effective pastor counseling and therefore, they may not be spending an adequate amount of time doing pastoral counseling to help their congregants.

After having created the Pre-Training Survey and the Post-Training Survey, I will continue my research by administering the Pre-Training Survey to the five pastors in the church I serve and see if each of them is adequately prepared for pastoral counseling and whether they each have a pastoral counseling process. Once the Pre-Training Survey has been administered and I have studied the results, I will then create the "Training Guide: Outline of 7 Principles" which the reader will encounter in Chapter 4 of this thesis-project. I will use this training guide to equip the five pastors that are on staff at the church I serve, to receive pastoral counseling training, with a focus on educating them on why they need to do pastoral counseling, and how

21. See Appendices A. Pre-Training Survey and B. Post Training Survey.

to go about it by sharing the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process. My hope is that this training will encourage them to live more fully into their pastoral role by spending more of their time counseling congregants, if they are not, and adopt the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process which I will share with them, as this may help them be more efficient and effective at their pastoral counseling function of their role as pastor.

After I have completed training the pastors, I will continue the research by creating and administering the Post-Training Survey to the five pastors in the church I serve and see if this training on why pastors need to counsel others and how to counsel others using the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process helped equip the pastors for the pastoral counseling part of their role, and whether this training they received will encourage them to do more pastoral counseling.

Once I have finished administering the Post-Training Survey, I will then study the results, compare the findings of both the Pre-Training Survey and the Post-Training Survey, and finally I will design focus group questions based on the results of my discoveries from the first two surveys. Then, I will gather this group of five pastors from the church I serve and lead a focus group to glean additional insights from them about this project as it relates to them in their context and I will report on my findings.

Outcomes

An analysis will be included of the results of the pastoral team's two surveys and of the focus group, and the findings will be reported. The hope is, after training the pastors on why they need to counsel congregants, and how they can counsel them using the eight elements of

the pastoral counseling process if they currently do not have a process, the pastors will be encouraged and motivated to do more pastoral counseling if they are lacking focus in this area of their ministry, and this will help them live more fully into their role as pastor.

One additional outcome that is likely to surface from the pastors, as a result of participating in this thesis-project, is the need for pastors to have additional training periodically on pastoral counseling, as well as on other areas of pastoral ministry, throughout a pastor's career. Doing this helps pastors sharpen their ministry skills and keeps them informed of current best practices in ministry.

So next, Chapter 2 will address the theological foundation that pastoral counseling is one of the pastor's main duties they need to carry out. Chapter 3 will review the main literature for why pastors need to do pastoral counseling and eight elements of the pastoral counseling process. Chapter 4 is a pastoral counseling training guide consisting of 7 principles. This guide will be utilized to provide training for the five pastors on staff at the church I serve on the necessity for pastoral counseling, as well as on the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process. The hope is that this training will encourage the pastors to do more pastoral counseling and adopt the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process I trained them on if they currently do not have a process. This pastoral counseling process may help the pastors be more efficient and effective at their pastoral counseling function of their role. Chapter 5 will discuss the results of the training with the pastoral staff of the church I serve to see if they benefited from understanding why they need to do pastoral counseling, and if the suggested eight elements of the pastoral counseling process may help them be more effective in doing pastoral counseling. These results will be gleaned from the feedback of the five pastors

by them taking the Pre-Training and Post-Training Surveys, as well as their participation in the Focus Group, so more can be learned from their experience of participating in this project.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

Introduction

The pastor, who is referred to as a teaching elder in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, can have his or her staff position divided into three main areas of ministry: preaching, leadership, and pastoral care/counseling. When examining 1 Peter 5:1-4, one can see each of these three main areas of ministry spelled out in the role of a "shepherd", which will be referred to from this point forward as the "teaching elder" or "pastor". After hearing many conversations with pastors over the past twenty-nine years of full-time ministry, it appears that pastors give less focus to pastoral care/counseling. The reason for this is because they do not think they are sufficiently trained to carry out the counseling part of their role well, and/or efficiently, given all their other ministry responsibilities. The hope is, after pastors complete this training, they will: first, be convicted of scripture's call, and other reasons, for them to fully carry out the counseling part of their pastoral care role; and second, they will be sufficiently trained on an effective, pastoral counseling process which will make the pastoral counseling part of their pastoral care role more manageable, given all the other responsibilities of their pastorate. Hopefully, this training will help equip the pastors to fully engage their congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to the pastors not feeling equipped to help; and they, instead, will quickly refer congregants to professional counselors.

To begin this journey, let us pray first. Lord, we need you to help us understand the role of a teaching elder. Help us to know each of the main ministry areas of responsibility of the

teaching elder, and in turn, do our best to get pastors equipped, and fully minister in each of these areas, all to your glory. We pray all this in your name, Amen.

1 Peter 5:1-4 provides us with three marks of an elder which will be discussed in this chapter. The first mark of an elder is an elder has a relationship with Christ. The second mark is elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines: preaching, leading, and caring. The third mark of an elder is the elder pleases Christ.

Three Marks of an Elder

Scripture tells us what the teaching elder's role is. We will explore 1 Peter 5:1-4 to examine what it means to shepherd the flock of God. In this passage there are three marks of an elder. Let us look at each mark.

The Elder Has a Relationship with Christ

The first mark of an elder is that they have a personal and growing relationship with Christ. Verse 1 states: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:"[1] Here Peter is focusing on the elders. The word "elder" in Greek is presbyterous and this word describes a person's spiritual maturity. Peter came as a fellow elder. "Fellow elder" tells us that Peter is an elder to the entire Christian community in the world, not to a specific church. Peter says I come to you not just as an apostle, like he states in 1 Peter 1:1, but as a fellow elder, as a leader in

1. 1 Peter 5:1. All scripture references are taken from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

the church. By Peter addressing himself as a fellow elder to other elders, he says I come to you as one of you, as opposed to him being superior to them. Peter does not come as one of Jesus' three most intimate friends, but rather as a fellow elder. Later, after our passage, in 1 Peter 5:9, Peter, in the capacity of a fellow elder, "is able to assure them (other elders) that 'the same kinds of suffering are being accomplished in your brotherhood throughout the world'".[2]

Peter had a personal relationship with the suffering and risen Christ. A witness is someone who sees and hears something and then tells others what he has seen and heard. "Witness" tells us that Peter's interest is to the elders to whom he is writing to, and not to himself. Both the elders to whom Peter is writing to, and for Peter, is the role of being a witness, who proclaims the sufferings of Christ. Peter leads the churches in presenting the sufferings of Christ to the world. Peter and the elders are called "witnesses" as they are the ones who are bringing a message.

Peter came as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. To be a "partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed" refers to one who shares in the glory, not one who shares with someone the glory, namely the elders. "The glory to be revealed" holds a reward for the elders, and for Peter, and it is the hope of the entire Christian community. Wayne Grudem notes,

> The fact that Peter is also a *partaker in the glory that is to be revealed* shows that full restoration from sin is certainly available through Christ. This phrase could refer to Peter's presence on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the cloud of God's glory overshadowed those with Jesus (Matt. 17:1-8; cf. 2 Pet. 1:16-18), but had he meant this he would probably have said something like, 'as well as a witness of the glory that *was*

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2. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 280.

> revealed.' The fact that he mentions this partaking in glory after he mentions his witnessing of the sufferings of Christ, and the fact that he says the glory is still *to be revealed*, suggest that he is thinking of the future glory that will come to believers when Christ returns (note this theme in 1:7; 4:13; 5:4, 10).[3]

When a relationship with Christ is real and being cultivated, in other words, growing, that person has a base from which to share and minister to others. If the elder is growing, often the congregants are growing. If the elder is stagnating, often the congregants are stagnating. This means elders should always be growing in their personal lives, in their spiritual walks, in their marriages, in the use of their gifts, and in their knowledge of God. All this is summed up in 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[4]

Shepherds the Flock Utilizing Three Disciplines

The second mark of an elder is they shepherd their flock of people through preaching, leading, and caring.[5] Verses 2 and 3 state: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."[6] "The task of the elders is now explained. They are to function as shepherds of God's flock. They are not to be like the shepherds indicated in Ezekiel 34 who treated their flock

3. Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 193-194.

4. 2 Peter 3:18.

5. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 171-173.

6. 1 Peter 5:2-3.

'harshly and brutally' (34:4), who cared only for themselves (34:8)."[7] "The metaphor (shepherd) became entrenched in early Christian tradition, with Jesus depicting himself as shepherd of the flock (Matthew 15:24, Mark 6:34, John 10:1-18)."[8] "Shepherd the flock of God" has the word shepherd used in its verb form here, whereas many times, the word shepherd is used in its noun form. And this word shepherd in Greek is poimanate. The pastoral function of elders in these two verses becomes more explicit than what was stated in Acts 20:28 which reads: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."[9] It is ironic that Peter is urging the elders to shepherd the flock of God that is among you. Peter denied Jesus when he was asked, "aren't you associated with Jesus?" and Peter responded that he did not know him! And Peter was not at Jesus' crucifixion. But Jesus graciously comes to him and says, "shepherd my sheep." And now Peter is imploring the elders to shepherd the flock of God. When Peter says to shepherd those among you, it demonstrates accountability and responsibility. Some scholars have suggested that each elder had certain individuals assigned to each of them.

An elder must be called by God. There is the inward call, where God calls the elder, and there is the calling of the body of believers, whom the elder will serve. In addition to being called by God, God additionally gifts the elder. You can tell if the elder has been called and

7. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 205.

8. Greg Forbes, *1 Peter*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 167.

9. Acts 20:28.

gifted by God, by the fruit they bear while they serve the people they are assigned to oversee and serve. An elder has the God-given capacity and desire to lead, teach, and care for the needs of a group of Christians. Only God, not us, equips all Christians with spiritual gifts. God equips the elders with gifts of leadership, preaching, and care. An elder wants to see the people entrusted to them grow, and an elder is protective of those under their care. If one is gifted, others will recognize, know, and approve it. An elder/preacher-teacher is to present the whole Word of God to feed their flock of people and one can see the results of his or her teaching as their group is fed and they grow in their walk with the Lord. As an elder/leader one leads their followers to be like Christ and one sees the results of their leading as the individuals in their flock of people become more like Christ. As an elder/caretaker, one helps meet the needs of the flock of people whom he or she is caring for, and one sees the results of his or her care as their flock's needs are met.

Preaching

One of the primary callings of an elder is to feed, or preach to, their flock. An elder is gifted to feed the flock. "God promises, "I will give you *shepherds after my own* heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15)."[10] Jesus, after His resurrection, told Peter to feed his sheep. Elders feed their flock. "The Lord is my shepherd," said David, "he leads me into green pastures." The shepherd, the elder, provides spiritual food for their flock of people so the flock can grow spiritually.

10. Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral traditions and leadership in the Bible (*Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 22.

One of the main tasks of an elder is to be a spiritual chef. My mother and grandmother told my brothers and me not to eat snacks right before our meals, as that will spoil our appetites for the upcoming meal. Elders are called to be spiritual chefs where they are to prepare a spiritual meal with its main ingredient being scripture, and it takes time and prayer to prepare a meal that is palatable and understandable through which a person can grow. An elder prays over and thinks through a passage of scripture, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, with in-depth study, and that all takes much time. The words of Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 say: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."[11] Elders need to be diligent in their study of scripture to show themselves approved, workers who do not need to be ashamed, rightly sharing God's Word. Elders need to be prepared by studying scripture thoroughly.

Each year, in the Middle East, shepherds make sure their sheep are fed. When it gets hot outside and the grasses die, the shepherds lead the sheep to green grass in the ravines down in the valley so the sheep can be fed. These places are dark. The sheep do not like going down to dark places because they have poor eyesight. The sheep do not like getting there, but once they are there, they are satisfied with all they can eat. Like shepherds making sure their sheep are fed, elders need to make sure their flock of people are fed spiritually with understanding and applying scripture to their lives. Elders want their flock to grow into being spiritually mature people, so the elder needs to teach them through all the books of the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation.

11. 2 Timothy 2:15.

Elders cannot be lazy teachers and must ensure their flocks are well fed. My wife is brilliant. Our family comes to the dinner table hungry. Knowing this, my wife decided that our family will allow snacking before dinner, and the snacking needs to be healthy and only from the vegetable tray. So, for most dinners, she would put out a vegetable tray before dinner, and given we were hungry, we would snack on raw vegetables. If our family chose not to snack like this, we would not eat as many vegetables as we eat. The point is, to have a healthy diet, we need to make sure we consume all the food groups, even though vegetables might not be our favorite. The same goes for the Bible. We need to know all of Scripture, not just the parts we may know best, or prefer to study, or whatever. An elder is gifted and will make sure their flock of people is fed well with all of Scripture.

According to R. C. Sproul, "…the shepherd is responsible to feed the sheep. This was set forth with great emphasis in Jesus' discourse with Peter after the resurrection, when He inquired of Peter's love for his Master. Jesus three times gave the mandate to Peter to feed His sheep—to tend the flock."[12] This command to Peter was important because "Sheep without food soon grow thin, weak, emaciated, and sickly—ultimately perishing. It is the first responsibility of the pastor to make sure that the sheep under his care are fed, nourished, and nurtured by the whole counsel of the Word of God."[13] "Every part of the Bible is about the historical unfolding revelation and accomplishment of gospel salvation through Jesus Christ."[14]

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12. R. C. Sproul, "Chapter 2: Shepherding the Flock", *Tabletalk Magazine* (May 2005), tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2005/05/shepherding-flock.

13. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

14. Julius J. Kim, *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God: Design and Deliver Gospel-Centered Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 57-58.

The pastor needs to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God and not avoid challenging passages. It is necessary to preach through the entire Bible because "The New Testament rebukes the believer who is satisfied with milk and flees from serious learning of the things of God by avoiding the difficult digestion of the meat of the Word of God."[15] 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 states, "But I brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?"[16] This is one example of believers being infants in Christ and being satisfied with milk, not meat when it comes to God's Word. R. C. Sproul continues, "But a good shepherd weans his sheep from the elemental principles of milk that is given to babes, and he gives them a diet that will cause them to become strong and fully equipped to do the ministry of the gospel. That feeding is given at the responsibility of the pastor."[17] Feeding is preaching God's word "on behalf of God with the divinely commissioned intention that the hearer hears God's message and responds to God in faith and obedience. In this sense, preaching is the word of God, for it is not only conveying a message from God, but it is performing the divinely intended purpose of God's word."[18]

Pastors need to know that their church leaders and their church support them in preaching through the entire Bible. R. C. Sproul states,

15. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

16. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

17. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

18. Sam Chan, *Preaching as the Word of God: Answering an Old Question with Speech-Act Theory* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 152-153.

> One of the great tragedies in the church of the twenty-first century, particularly in Protestantism, is that while pastors are given the responsibility for leading their congregations, rarely do they receive a level of authority that matches that responsibility. For the most part, they are considered hirelings by the governing boards of the local church, whether it be a board of elders, deacons, or a consistory. So that the pastor, in being subordinate to the elder board, always has to keep one eye on his supervisors before he takes the reigns to lead the flock of Christ. This is one of the reasons why so many pastors have compromised the preaching of the gospel.[19]

Pastors need freedom to follow God in their preaching as "They have been so fearful that they would lose their jobs by being bold in their preaching and passionate in their concern for the sheep that they keep one eye on the sheep and the other eye on those who hire and fire them. This is not the biblical model."[20]

Leading

Leading the flock is a second primary calling of an elder. An elder is gifted to lead their flock. "One of the primary metaphors by which biblical authors conceptualized leadership is shepherding."[21] Verse 2 begins with: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight."[22] To lead, to oversee, the elder needs to have a clear vision of who God is and where God wants the church to go, and to be able to lead the people to go there. The elder is a good shepherd of God's flock because "a good shepherd is one who sees what the Owner (God)

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19. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

20. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

21. Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral traditions and leadership in the Bible (*Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 21.

22. 1 Peter 5:2a.

sees and does what the Owner (God) does. He is a follower *before* he is a leader. He is a leader *because* he is a follower."[23] Elders need to continue to lead their people, even though they, like sheep, can be resistant to change. Elders are there to lead their people because their flock is not going to do everything in line with what God wants. The elder is not only willing to lead the people even when they resist, but the elder is willing to give their life for their people.

"In 1978 James MacGregor Burns published his seminal work, ***Leadership***. This book shifted and shaped the paradigm on leadership studies."[24] "The main idea that Burns proposed was a differentiation between transactional and transformational leaders. Transactional leaders utilize a social exchange to accomplish their goals. The example of politics is used frequently: you vote for me and I'll do this for you."[25] In the church, transactional elders view their responsibilities like a transaction where the elder does "this" for the church, and the elder gets "that" in return. It is a transaction between the elder and the people in the church who hire the elder. This type of leadership puts the elder and the hiring authorities of the church in the leadership decision making role, and leaves God out of the leading process.

"Transformational leaders operate much differently. These leaders inspire people to reach for a common goal. They develop, train, and mentor future talent. They empower people to accomplish tasks."[26] "These leaders show everyone the big picture and why it's important."[27] In

23. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 22.

24. Sam Reiner, "Transactional or Transformational Church Leadership?", *Leading the Established Church* (August 13, 2008), https://samrainer.com/2008/08/transactional-or-tranformational-church-leadership.

25. Sam Reiner, "Transactional or Transformational Church Leadership?", *Leading the Established Church* (August 13, 2008), https://samrainer.com/2008/08/transactional-or-tranformational-church-leadership.

26. Sam Reiner, "Transactional or Transformational Church Leadership?", *Leading the Established Church* (August 13, 2008), https://samrainer.com/2008/08/transactional-or-tranformational-church-leadership.

the church, transformational elders recognize what their duties are and knows that he or she is accountable to the church, but instead of seeking to please the church, like an employee seeks to please his or her boss, this type of elder is primarily concerned with pleasing God. This type of elder is God's representative among God's people and while speaking the truth in love, this elder may tell the church what they may not want to hear, but what they need to hear. This type of elder does not see their role as making the church happy, but rather leading them to be holy. This is what it means to lead the church spiritually from where they are presently and taking them to where God wants them to be.

A pastor leads by taking the time to guide and supervise his or her congregants. R.C. Sproul states, "…to be a shepherd over the flock of sheep means that it is the shepherd's responsibility to lead the sheep. If anyone has observed the behavior of sheep who are left unguided, without the care and constant supervision of a shepherd, he is aware that sheep tend to move willy-nilly in all directions without any order to their movement."[28] "The Lord identified this problem in Ezekiel 34:21, noting that the shepherd's attempts at leadership consisted of trying to push the sheep around rather than leading them. But one does not lead from behind. You do not drive sheep; you lead them. You do not shoo them, you woo them."[29] Shepherds provide constant supervision and care to their sheep because "they (the sheep) are prone to getting lost, getting injured, and being left in a state of vulnerability unless they are

27. Sam Reiner, "Transactional or Transformational Church Leadership?", *Leading the Established Church* (August 13, 2008), https://samrainer.com/2008/08/transactional-or-tranformational-church-leadership.

28. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

29. Deron J. Biles, *Pastoral Ministry: The Ministry of a Shepherd* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), 24.

cared for by a shepherd. So, it is with the flock of Christ. It is the chief responsibility of the pastor, who is the shepherd, to lead the sheep."[30]

To lead the flock, each pastor needs to take the time to teach and train his or her congregants, so they are equipped to serve the Lord, and they have certain skills necessary for growth in the faith. R.C. Sproul states, "It is the responsibility of the pastor to equip the sheep by teaching them and training them. There is a difference between teaching and training. Teaching involves the imparting of information from one person to another. Training requires more hands-on participation, showing someone how to master a particular skill."[31] "The first, and most basic, element in effecting change is knowledge. Generally speaking, God works in the mind first; then He enables us to live consistently with the new way of thinking."[32] This is teaching. "The second element encouraging transforming growth is choice. Acting on the truth enables living the truth."[33] This is training. Offering a class on what one needs to believe about the faith is insufficient to equip each believer as much more is needed. R.C. Sproul continues, "It is not enough for a pastor simply to communicate information through expositional preaching or to explain the doctrines of the faith to his flock. He is also called to see to it that they are trained in certain skills necessary for growth in the faith."[34] There are many aspects to living out our faith. Our faith involves more than understanding doctrine, although that is very

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30. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

31. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

32. Richard R. Jr. & Shera Melick, *Teaching That Transforms: Facilitating Life Change Through Adult Bible Teaching* (Dallas, TX: B&H Academic, 2010), 81.

33. Melick, *Teaching That Transforms,* 82.

34. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

important. “It is the pastor’s responsibility to teach the sheep how to pray, how to worship, how to evangelize, how to be engaged profitably in the mercy ministries of the church. In these enterprises, the pastor is to mirror and reflect the ministry of Jesus Himself, who gave of Himself completely to those given to Him by the Father.”[35] “The Holy Spirit empowers the believer. He enables a Christian to think and act differently from before, to break the power of the past habits. There is no ability to grow as a Christian without the power of the Holy Spirit.”[36] To lead our flock well, pastors need to make sure our congregants are taught and trained in all aspects of what it means to be a Christian, and they rely on the Holy Spirit’s power to fully live out our faith. “So the pastor must see his congregation as a flock of sheep that is entrusted to him by the Father and by the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may help the saints become all that they can become in the ministry of the gospel.”[37] Effectively leading requires the pastor to teach and train well his or her flock.

Caring

Caring for the flock is a third primary calling of an elder. One important aspect of caring for people is counseling them. There are faithful elders, and there are unfaithful elders. According to Ezekiel 34, unfaithful shepherds: feed themselves and not the sheep; allow the sheep to scatter and then they do not pursue the sheep; and they rule over the sheep with

35. Sproul, “Chapter 2”.

36. Melick, *Teaching That Transforms,* 84-85.

37. Sproul, “Chapter 2”.

force and harshness. And then Ezekiel 34 reverses it and says the shepherds of Israel are unfaithful, but the Lord God, the faithful Shepherd, will care for the sheep as He will feed, and gather, and protect the sheep. Elders need to be faithful in caring for their flock of people. In John 10, the Good Shepherd, the best role model shepherd, is spoken about and guess what He is? He is not a hired hand that will run away. No. He lays down his life for the sheep. Elders need to care for their flock of people by providing pastoral care and pastoral counseling for them. Are elders doing this? According to Timothy Laniak, "Undershepherds are each charged with their discrete 'portion' (*kleros*) of the Chief Shepherd's flock (v. 3; cf. 2:25; Heb. 13:20; 2 Kgs 3:4). The use of *kleros*, found most frequently in Septuagint Numbers-Judges, suggests that the 'real estate' in the new community is the people themselves, clustered under caring guardians."[38] Pastors need to care for their flock, like a good parent or guardian cares for their children, and their family, and their extended family.

R.C. Sproul remarks, "…the pastor (elder) is called to tend the flock. Following again John's imagery from nature, when a sheep is wounded or becomes ill, it is to be noticed by the good shepherd, who takes that sheep from the flock and gives the special attention needed by the sheep to be restored to fullness of health."[39] The good shepherd knows his or her sheep well and is very aware when one or more of the sheep is or are hurting and in need of care. The good shepherd, knowing care is needed, does not neglect any of his or her sheep, but rather he or she engages and cares for each sheep to the best of his or her abilities. R. C. Sproul continues the comparison of shepherd to pastor, "So it is that the good pastor is one who knows the

38. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 234.

39. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

aches, the pains, the joys, and the sorrows of each member of his congregation, so that he can tend to their needs and so that they aren't overcome by physical maladies or by spiritual and psychological distress."[40] This shows that the good pastor knows his or her flock and is ready to care for each of them and tend to their needs when they are hurting physically, spiritually, and/or psychologically. R. C. Sproul finishes this thought unit with the goal for the pastor when he states, "He is there to encourage the sheep and to see to it that they grow to the fullness of maturity in the life of Christ, conforming to Christ's very image."[41]

When elders care and shepherd the flock, Peter informs us of three ways they should go about this. Verses 2 and 3 state elders when caring and shepherding the flock need to be about: "…exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."[42] First, elders need to shepherd the flock not under compulsion, but willingly. In other words, the elder is not to do their role simply out of obligation. "However willing our service, there is a time to do our duty whether we feel like it or not."[43] One should not be pressured to accept the role of being an elder if they do not sense God calling them to this role. Elders need to freely and willingly chose to do their role. If a person is not willing to serve as an elder, God will raise someone else up for this role.

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40. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

41. Sproul, "Chapter 2".

42. 1 Peter 5:2b-3.

43. Daniel M. Doriani, *1 Peter,* Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014), 4c.

Second, elders need to shepherd the flock not for shameful gain, but eagerly. Being an elder is not a career, it is a calling. An elder is focused on serving the Lord, not focused on just having a job. Elders serve laying up their treasurers in heaven, not here on earth. Elders are focused on serving others in the flock, not on being served. Elders need to shepherd the flock and not build a name for themselves.

Third, elders need to shepherd their people, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to them. The term katakyrieuo, is translated domineering, and it means bringing something into control by way of physical, military, or political force. Peter bans the elders from using self-centered, or overly limiting rule. An elder does not need to be a perfect example to follow, as Paul advised others to imitate his example (see 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1; Philippians 3:17, 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). Paul also told Timothy (see 1 Timothy 4:12) and Titus (see Titus 2:7-8) that they were to live as Christian examples to others. Elders need to live a life worthy of imitation—even though this is challenging, it is a major part of their role. Elders are shepherds who oversee but should not lord over others. Elders need to lead, not drive their flock of people. Elders are shepherds who know and show the way for their flock of people. Elders cannot ask people to do something they are not willing to do. Elders must lead by example if they want their flock to follow Jesus and be Godly.

Pleases Christ

The third mark of an elder is they have hope and a powerful desire to please Christ. Verse 4 states: “And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of

glory."[44] Elders need to shepherd the flock willingly and eagerly, and they are to be examples to their people. When Jesus appears, during the second coming of Christ, elders will receive the unfading crown of life. Elders' presence is a reminder of the eschatological promise that is coming. The Bible states, that in the end, according to Revelation 7:17: "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."[45] Revelation 22:4 states: "They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."[46] Elders are there to serve and shepherd others because of the providence of God, not because of their gifts or abilities. Elders view life in light of Christ's redemptive work in which Christ's resurrection is proof that His death atoned for sin.

Jesus is the chief shepherd. Elders are under-shepherds feeding Jesus' flock that he entrusted to us. Leading up to 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter encourages people who are suffering to hang in there during tough times since they are going to get a reward. They need to look toward the goal of God's glory. Peter then says the same things to elders. Elders' motivation for ministry is to please Jesus Christ not people. If elders try to please people, it is very difficult to manage, because they end up pleasing one person, but there will be someone else who will not be pleased. Peter points the elders to look beyond this present world, not expecting earthly rewards. When Christ appears at his second coming, Peter says, elders will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

44. 1 Peter 5:4.

45. Revelation 7:17.

46. Revelation 22:4.

In verse 4, crown refers to a "wreath" which a winner of an athletic contest would earn, like in 1 Corinthians 9:25, which states: "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."[47] Crown also refers to a crown worn by a king, like in 2 Samuel 12:30, which states: "And he took the crown of their king from his head. The weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone, and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount."[48] The crown is a symbol of special honor given not to all, but only to those who earned public recognition for their admirable accomplishment. Peter mentions in the age to come, elders will receive the unfading crown of glory for their faithful service to God as an elder in this life.

Verse 4 shows us that elders need to execute well the duties and responsibilities of their role in a way that pleases God. They should not be motivated to execute their elder duties to achieve honor or recognition, but rather to gain the reward of the unfading crown of glory, when Christ returns. This should be the prize which elders work for today. Elders' ministry should be done to please Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, like Ephesians 6:6 states, "not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."[49] In the end, elders will stand before Jesus, the Chief Shepherd and if they have served Christ well, like 1 Peter 5:1-4 states, then they will receive the unfading crown of glory—that will not fade and will last for all eternity. Unlike the Olympic games in Athens, if one placed as a winner, he or she received a prize of a wreath on his or her head, and that wreath died in about

47. 1 Corinthians 9:25.

48. 2 Samuel 12:30.

49. Ephesians 6:6.

a week. This wreath prize diminishes quickly. Serving for God's approval is best, because serving God for personal gain or recognition, does not last. Elders need to long for Jesus to tell us, like what is written in Matthew 25:21: "well done, good and faithful servant."[50]

We have located the subject of this work, pastoral counseling, within the biblical and theological framework of the Bible's teaching on elders as shepherds. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, it appears that one of the reasons pastors give less focus to pastoral counseling part of their role is they may not be convicted of scripture's call for them to fully carry out this aspect of their position. The hope is, that this chapter, after having examined 1 Peter 5:1-4, will help pastors understand and be convicted to carry out pastoral counseling. This will be reinforced in Chapter 4 as well. Let us now return our focus to the counseling aspect of a pastor's ministry.

50. Matthew 25:21a.

CHAPTER THREE

PASTOR'S ROLE AND COUNSELING PROCESS LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Contained in this chapter is a review of the major contributing resources of literature which were read, evaluated, analyzed, and applied in preparing this thesis-project. These literature resources discuss the role of a pastor, who is referred to as a teaching elder, in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and are some of the key writings on pastoral counseling process. As stated in Chapter 2, the main objectives of this training thesis-project are that pastors will: first, be convicted of scripture's call, and other reasons too, for them to fully carry out the counseling part of their pastoral care role, and second, they will be sufficiently trained on the eight elements of an effective, pastoral counseling process, which will make the pastoral counseling part of their pastoral care role more manageable, given all the other responsibilities of their pastorate. Hopefully, this training will help equip pastors to fully engage their congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to the pastors not feeling equipped to help, and they instead, quickly refer congregants to professional counselors.

In this chapter, the literature review will be discussed as it relates to the seven principles which were gleaned from reading and studying for this thesis-project. Even though there is repetition in this chapter of the training principles gleaned from Chapters 1 and 2, it is important to show how key literature resources contributed to and helped form and shape each of the seven training principles. The first six principles help the reader understand the importance of why pastors need to do pastoral counseling. The seventh principle helps the

reader understand how to more effectively counsel others, by considering the eight elements of an effective process for the pastor to utilize when doing pastoral counseling. As the major sources of literature are discussed for each of these seven principles, some other sources will be discussed as well, as they too have contributed to the training principles in this thesis-project. Each of these seven principles will be included in Chapter 4, as they will be the basis for the training, which will be used to equip the five pastors of the church I serve. With this baseline established, for the first principle, we turn to scripture to understand the role of pastors, and scripture's call for pastors to fully carry out the counseling part of their pastoral care role.

Principle #1: Three Characteristics of an Elder

As one reads this first principle, one may recall that this principle was introduced in Chapter 2, the theological foundation for pastoral counseling. Because scripture calls the elders to have three characteristics, the church needs to make sure our pastors are educated and properly trained on these characteristics and what their role is. It is important to start the training of pastors with the biblical foundation of which scripture describes the three characteristics of elders and what their role is.

The first item to accomplish in the training, is for pastors to understand, and be convicted of, scripture's call for them to fully carry out the counseling part of the pastoral care role. The place to turn in scripture to understand the role of an elder is 1 Peter 5:1-4. After studying this passage of scripture, one can deepened his or her understanding of what 1

Peter 5:1-4 is communicating, by reading many commentaries, and some books, and some other resources to grow deeper in one's understanding of the role of the elder. For this first principle of understanding the role of the elder and why the pastor needs to be prepared to do pastoral counseling, the two main resources found to be most helpful and which contributed toward this thesis-project were Wayne Grudem's *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on 1 Peter, and Timothy Laniak's book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible.* These two resources share why pastors need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling because pastoral counseling is part of their role as they carry out the care function of their position.

1 Peter 5:1-4. explains that there are three characteristics of an elder, as elders shepherd the flock of God. First, elders have a relationship with Christ. Second, elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines: preaching, leading, and caring. Third, elders please Christ. Let us look at these next.

The Elder Has a Relationship with Christ

Elders have a personal and growing relationship with Christ. 1 Peter 5:1 states: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:"[1] Peter is focused on elders here. J. Ramsey Michael's *Word Biblical Commentary* on 1 Peter was helpful to understand what "fellow elder" means as he stated, "Peter's intention is to establish collegiality with the elders

1. 1 Peter 5:1.

in the churches to which he writes."[2] And in Wayne Grudem's *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on 1 Peter, Wayne Grudem agrees with J. Ramsey Michael's comment of Peter being a "fellow elder" when he states, "Peter immediately classes himself with the elders: *as a* fellow *elder*. This lets the elders know that he thinks of himself as one of those with whom judgment will begin—even he, an apostle, is not exempt, nor should any among his readers think themselves too important or too sanctified to be exempt."[3] Verse 1 says elders have a personal and growing relationship with Christ, and they are witnesses of the sufferings of Christ.

Wayne Grudem, in his *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on 1 Peter shares elders are witnesses of the sufferings of Christ when he states, "But 'witness of the sufferings of Christ' bluntly recalls, for Peter and for anyone familiar with the details surrounding Christ's crucifixion, the most painful episode in Peter's life—for we remember just what kind of 'witness' Peter was: one whose courage failed and who three times denied that he even knew Christ (Matt. 26:69-75)."[4] Wayne Grudem in his *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on 1 Peter continues, "Why does Peter recall this? Probably to demonstrate that restoration even from grievous sin is possible with Christ."[5] Peter and elders are to have a relationship with Christ in which they proclaim the sufferings of Christ, and they are partakers in the glory

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2. J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 280.

3. Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 193.

4. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 193.

5. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 193.

that is going to be revealed.

Wayne Grudem, in his *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* on 1 Peter shares elders are partakers in the glory that is going to be revealed. Wayne Grudem notes, "Peter is an 'elder' who has sinned, repented, been restored, and will share with Christ in glory. He can rightly 'exhort' any elder in whose life there is sin likewise to repent and be restored before God's disciplinary refining fire reaches him."[6] Peter and elders are to have a personal and growing relationship with Christ and will be a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. Elders should always be growing in their personal lives, in the use of their gifts, and in their knowledge of God. So, as we just read, the first of three characteristics of an elder, as elders shepherd the flock of God, is that elders have a relationship with Christ. Now, let us look at the second characteristic next which is, elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines: preaching, leading, and caring.

Shepherds the Flock Utilizing Three Disciplines

Elders, according to scripture and stated by Charles Talbert in his commentary, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles,* shepherd their flock of people through preaching, leading, and caring.[7] 1 Peter 5:2 begins by saying: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight."[8] Peter is pleading

6. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 194.

7. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 171-173.

8. 1 Peter 5:2a.

to the elders to shepherd the flock of God that is among you as Jesus graciously came to Peter and said, "shepherd my sheep." Helping elders to understand who the sheep ultimately belong to, and who has responsibility to care for the sheep, Donald Senior states in his *Sacra Pagina Series on* 1 Peter that the flock of people "belongs to God but is entrusted to the care of the elders."[9]

R. C. Sproul in his *1-2 Peter: An Expositional Commentary* helped further the understanding of how the elder in relation to the flock is "exercising oversight" or "watching over them" which these phrases come from the Greek verb, episkopos. The word episcopal comes from that, and this is a bishop, in other words, an overseer, a superintendent one who exercises oversight.[10] Elders lead followers to be like Christ, and the elders see the results of their leading as the people in their flock of people become more like Christ. A first way elders shepherd their flock of people is through preaching, which we will look at next.

Preaching

Elders shepherd their flocks of people through the discipline of preaching. Elders are to feed, or preach to, their flock of people. Timothy Laniak in his book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* states, "God promises, 'I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah

9. Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter,* Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 15 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 139.

10. R.C. Sproul, *1-2 Peter: An Expositional Commentary* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019), 159.

3:15).'"[11] Jesus, after His resurrection, asked Peter three times, if he loved him. And Peter responded, yes, Lord, I love you. Then Jesus told him to feed my sheep. Elders feed their flock of people. Eugene Stowe expands on this thought, from his book, *The Ministry of Shepherding: A Study of Pastoral Practice* when he states, "Here are the spiritual nutrients which the sheep desperately need. Well-fed flocks do not fall prey to the biting winds of adversity or sicken and die like those who spiritual resistance has dropped to a dangerously low level. Such pulpit fare is the most effective preventive medicine for the soul."[12] Elders shepherd their flocks through preaching. A second way elders shepherd their flock of people is through leading, which we will look at next.

Leading

Elders shepherd their flocks of people through a second discipline which is leading. Timothy Laniak in his book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* states, "The God of Scripture chooses regularly to engage humans (elders) in the tasks of leadership."[13] And Timothy Laniak continues, "The promised shepherds (elders) are those who will lead 'with knowledge and understanding'. A shepherd needs God's heart, but also a sharp, godly mind. The challenges of leadership require deep reservoirs of discernment

11. Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible (*Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 22.

12. Eugene L. Stowe, *The Ministry of Shepherding: A Study of Pastoral Practice* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1976), 64.

13. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 22.

and wisdom."[14] 1 Peter 5:2 begins with: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight."[15] Elders are leaders of God's people, so they are, like Karen Jobes states in her *1 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, "under shepherds of God the Great Shepherd".[16] A pastor leads by taking the time to guide and supervise his or her congregants. Deron Biles states in his book, *Pastoral Ministry: The Ministry of a Shepherd*, "The absence of shepherd leadership results in wandering, unsafe, confused, and hungry sheep."[17] Congregants need their pastor to be present in their lives so he or she can encourage them and help lead and guide them in God's ways. A third way elders shepherd their flock of people is through caring, which we will look at next.

Caring

Elders shepherd their flocks of people through a third discipline which is caring. Elders look out for their flock of people, and assess what they need, and help provide for them. As Timothy Laniak in his book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* states, the elder's "appointment by God implies calling, stewardship and accountability. This short promise also speaks of a capacity to care for God's flock with self-sacrificing diligence and compassion."[18] One important facet of caring for people is counseling

14. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 22.

15. 1 Peter 5:2a.

16. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter,* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 305.

17. Deron J. Biles, *Pastoral Ministry: The Ministry of a Shepherd* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), 24.

18. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 22.

them. Elders need to care for their flock of people by providing pastoral care and pastoral counseling for them. One's effectiveness as a pastoral counselor is not based on skills and abilities, but rather on ushering people, who come for help, into the healing presence with the best counselor of all, God.

In fact, Wayne Oates stated in E. Brooks Holifield's book, *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, that pastoral counseling "did not derive its criteria and methods from psychoanalysts, but from the history of the church".[19] David Benner in his book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*, affirms this concept when he writes, "The essence of pastoral counseling is helping troubled people bring their woundedness, struggles, doubts, and anxieties into dynamic healing contact with the God who is known by his people as the wonderful Counselor. This is the most important thing a pastor can do."[20] Pastors need to usher people into God's presence, so they encounter the best healer of all, God.

When elders shepherd the flock, Peter informs us of three ways they should go about this. 1 Peter 5:2-3 state: "…exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock."[21] As Timothy Laniak in his book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* states, "The emphasis exceeds volunteerism to include a joyful embrace of God's will."[22] I. Howard Marshall, in his *1 Peter: The*

19. E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America (*Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983), 344.

20. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

21. 1 Peter 5:2b-3.

22. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 233.

IVP New Testament Commentary Series adds, "A person who is appointed as a leader (elder) must do his job not simply because he has been so appointed—and therefore halfheartedly—but from a real desire to serve."[23] Second, elders need to focus on serving others in the flock, not on being served. Third, Peter directs elders, who are shepherds, should govern in the church not by intimidating others, but by the power of their example, striving to make their life a model to follow. So, as we just read, the second of three characteristics of an elder, as elders shepherd the flock of God, is that elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines: preaching, leading, and caring. Now, let us look at the third characteristic next which is, elders please Christ.

Elder Pleases Christ

Elders desire to please Christ. 1 Peter 5:4 states: "And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."[24] Timothy Laniak in his book, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* states, "The 'crown of glory' reinforces an important theme in 1 Peter…the suffering of the great Shepherd led ultimately to his glory. That glory will be shared by those who suffer with him, like him and for him. A deferred reward will vindicate all those who are identified with the sacrificial lamb."[25] Elders are under the Chief Shepherd's, Jesus', authority. God has placed elders in life to speak the

23. I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter,* The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 162-163.

24. 1 Peter 5:4.

25. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart,* 234.

words of God and shepherd God's people. Elders have hope and a powerful desire to please Christ because they love Jesus, and they live life based on the gospel.

As mentioned above, these two main resources, one written by Wayne Grudem and the other by Timothy Laniak, contributed to this thesis-project by helping to see the need to include "Principle #1: Three Characteristics of an Elder" in this project, as it is important for elders to start with scripture and see what their role is. Scripture informs elders to: have a relationship with Christ, shepherd the flock using preaching and leading and caring, and please Christ by serving Him and receiving their deferred reward one day. When the pastor sees the full picture of their role, by having examined 1 Peter 5:1-4, the pastor can see that pastoral counseling is one of the necessary ways they will care for their flock. The hope is, this will begin to help the pastors understand and be convicted of scripture's call for them to fully carry out the counseling part of their pastoral care role if they currently are not. Pastors need to engage fully in all aspects of their role, like pastoral counseling, even though this is not as visible to others like preaching and leading are—all elder responsibilities are visible to God and that is what matters most. For this first principle, the biblical and theological framework of scripture's teaching on elders as shepherds was examined, and the necessity of pastors doing pastoral counseling and the other aspects of their position was discovered.

Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help

For the second principle, which helps elders understand another reason why they need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling, the two main resources found to be most helpful and contributed toward this thesis-project here were David Benner's book, *Strategic*

Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model and Brian H. Childs' book, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide*.

As stated in Chapter 1, research shows that people approach pastors for help. David Benner, in his book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model* shares, "…in spite of what often seems to be a diminishing sphere of influence for the church in society, a considerably higher percentage of people go to the clergy for help with personal problems than to any other helping profession."[26] Also, Brian Childs in his book, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide,* agrees with Benner by stating, "Masters and Johnson tell us that 70 percent of all the people who consulted their foundation had at one time or another also consulted a minister regarding their problem."[27]

These two books, one written by David Benner and the other one by Brian Childs, contributed to this thesis-project by helping see the need to include "Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help" basis the research they provided. This research shows people approach pastors, more than any other helping profession, to get help for their issues. Given this, pastors need to be informed of these research findings and they need to be trained and ready to provide pastoral counseling.

Principle #3: Pastoral Counseling Helps with Relevance

26. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 34.

27. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling,* 19-20.

For this third principle, which helps elders understand another reason why they need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling, the main resource found to be most helpful and contributed toward this thesis-project here was Howard Clinebell's book, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth*. This resource shares the theory and practice of the basic types of pastoral counseling as a ministry of the church. This resource shares both why pastors need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling and it provides input on the pastoral counseling process.

In addition to people turning to pastors for help, Howard Clinebell in his book, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth* adds, that pastoral care and counseling is an effective way churches stay relevant, and "relevance means presence to where persons hurt and hope, curse and pray, hunger for meaning, and thirst for significant relationships."[28] This thesis-project will encourage elders to understand the first six principles of why they need to provide pastoral counseling, followed by their need to understand the seventh principle of having a well-defined pastoral counseling process containing the eight elements for an effective counseling process, which can help the church remain relevant in society by meeting more of peoples' needs through pastoral counseling.

Principle #4: Pastors are Experts

For this fourth principle, which helps elders understand another reason why they need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling, the two main resources found to be most helpful and

28. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 1.

contributed toward this thesis-project here were David Benner's book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model* and Charles Kollar's book, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*. These two resources share both why pastors need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling and they provide input on the pastoral counseling process.

Pastoral counselors are the experts in the counseling they provide, because in their counseling process, they speak God's Word to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help. Counseling that is not pastoral, does not require that God's Word be spoken to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help. David Benner in his book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model,* makes this point when he states, "The importance of pastoral care and counseling is grounded in the centrality of the proclamation of the Word of God in Christian ministry."[29] David Benner further states, "Understood in this way, pastoral care and counseling are legitimate parts of Christian ministry because they provide a unique opportunity for God's Word to be spoken to the specific life experiences of the person seeking pastoral help."[30] And lastly, David Benner adds,

> Ministers are the only counseling professionals who routinely have training in systematic theology, biblical studies, ethics, and church history, and this framework of understanding gives pastoral counselors an invaluable perspective on those seeking their help. What a shame, therefore, when ministers abandon this perspective for a psychological one, judging the latter to be superior or more prestigious.[31]

Charles Kollar, in his book, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, adds to this discussion of pastors being experts when he states, "I believe the counselor's task is to look for this *writing*

29. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 9.

30. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 10.

31. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 31-32.

of the Spirit in the counselee's life, rather than concentrating on present or past problems. This is what ministers *are* experts at doing.[32] Pastors are experts because pastors in their counseling process, speak God's Word to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help, and also, they see how the Holy Spirit is at work in a person. These things help pastors meet the counselee's needs.

These two books, one written by David Benner and other by Charles Kollar contributed to this thesis-project by helping see the need to include "Principle #4: Pastors Are Experts" based on the information they provided and can be summed up as: pastors are experts at seeing how the Holy Spirit is at work in a person and knowing this can help the counselee.

Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling

For this fifth principle, which helps elders understand another reason why they need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling, the main resources found to be most helpful and contributed toward this thesis-project here were David Benner's book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*, and Wayne Oats' book, *Pastoral Counseling,* and an article he wrote called *Protestant Pastoral Counseling.* These resources share both why pastors need to be prepared to do pastoral counseling and they provide input on the pastoral counseling process.

Pastoral counseling is distinct from other counseling. Defining pastoral counseling helps us see it uniqueness. David Benner writes, "The essence of pastoral counseling is helping

32. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 22.

troubled people bring their woundedness, struggles, doubts, and anxieties into dynamic healing contact with God who is known by his people as the wonderful Counselor. This is the most important thing a pastor can do."[33] Wayne Oates further reinforces this definition when he writes, "As the report of the Commission on the Ministry of the New York Academy of Sciences puts it, 'The clergyman always sees God as a partner in the counseling process…and feels rather hesitant in attributing to his own efforts whatever success may be achieved.'"[34] During pastoral counseling, the pastor is connecting God to the counselee's life and their experiences.

These resources, one written by Wayne Oates and the other by David Benner contributed to this thesis-project by helping see the need to include "Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling" basis the writing contribution both these authors provided. Pastors are connecting the counselee to God, and they are understanding how God is working in the counselee's life. Having God be part of the counseling process is the best thing a pastor can do to help the counselee, so pastors need to be trained on this principle and ready to provide pastoral counseling.

Principle #6: Pastors Need to Fulfill Their Role

This sixth principle helps pastors understand another reason why they need to be prepared and ready to do pastoral counseling and that is because it is part of their role. When I asked the Dean of my doctoral program, Dr. David Currie, why my degree focuses on three

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33. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

34. Wayne E. Oates, *Protestant Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952), 58. ("The Findings of the Commission in the Ministry," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 63, Article 3, November 7, 1955, 428.)

areas, preaching, leadership, and pastoral care/counseling, he mentioned that Dr. Kenneth Swetland, one of his mentors, stated that these are the three main functions of pastoral ministry. My church's pastoral team is focused on preaching/teaching, and leading our ministries, as well as performing the necessary pastoral care/counseling that comes our way. Of these three main functions, a hunch is that less than a third of our pastoral team's time is focused on pastoral care/counseling. If this hunch is true, maybe the reason for this is, the pastors do not feel sufficiently trained to do pastoral counseling, so they refer congregants to professional counselors, or maybe the more visible parts of the pastor's role like preaching/teaching and leading ministries get more of the pastor's time, and the less visible parts like pastoral counseling do not, and/or maybe there are other reasons. Bottom-line, pastoral counseling is part of the pastor's role, so it is essential that they need to do it fully.

Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process

It is helpful for pastors to have a pastoral counseling process containing eight elements, which is briefly described next. The primary source for the elements of this pastoral counseling process is David Benner's book, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*, with additional supplements from others. This book by David Benner is the prevailing pastoral counseling textbook today. Not only do these eight elements of the counseling process help guide pastors to be more efficient and effective when counseling others, but additionally, when this counseling process is communicated to the congregation, it benefits the congregants, as they are informed of what they can expect in terms of counseling from their pastor. Before we discuss the pastoral counseling process, let us briefly look at referring congregants.

Referring Congregants

It is important to know when it is best to refer congregants. Brian Childs, in his book, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide*, mentioned, referring congregants is sometimes needed, when he stated: "The problem presented by the client is so complex or so far out of the experience and expertise of the pastor that adequate counseling would be difficult".[35] This is especially true with difficult cases as some congregants will bring issues that only those trained in psychotherapy should be handling, for example, working on changing underlying personality issues, or deep-seated conflicts. In these situations, it is recommended to refer the counselee. Now let us look very briefly at the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process.

Eight Elements of the Pastoral Counseling Process

Each pastor does not have to invent a pastoral counseling process for himself or herself since one already exists and is ready for them to apply it in their role. For this process, David Benner's framework will be adopted. There are eight elements to a cohesive pastoral counseling process which are next.

1. Intake Meeting Where Counselee Describes Problem

Brian Childs, in his book, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide* shares how the pastor's first task in the counseling process is to do a diagnostic or evaluation interview. During the start of this interview, the pastor is focused on putting the counselee at ease. When striving

35. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 86.

to put the counselee at ease, Brian Childs comments, "It lets the counselees know that you are interested in them as whole persons and not just with their problems; that you have some notion of where they have been and who they are because you have shared similar experiences."[36] Then the pastor asks the counselee what he or she would like to share with him or her. During the intake meeting, the pastor counselor will understand the counselee's one main presenting problem, set the boundaries for the counseling relationship by sharing their pastoral counseling process, and develop a mutually acceptable focus that the pastor and the counselee will work on together.

2. Maximum of Five One-hour Sessions

The pastoral counseling process to address the one main presenting problem must be completed in a maximum of five sessions. David Benner states, "The suggested maximum number of sessions for strategic pastoral counseling…is five."[37] To accomplish this, the pastor needs to attend to the congregant and the Holy Spirit while directing the content and process of each session. If more than five sessions are needed, then the pastor needs to refer the congregant to a professional counselor.[38]

3. Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements

Pastoral counseling must be holistic. According to David Benner, the pastor needs

36. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 61.

37. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 48.

38. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 48-54.

to focus on the congregant's affective (feeling), cognitive (thought), and behavioral (action) elements of functioning, and not just focus on one, or a couple of these elements. Focusing on all of three of these elements gives the pastoral counselor a more accurate and fuller evaluation of the counselee.[39]

4. Counseling is Structured

Pastoral counseling must be structured. David Benner shares how "Each of the sessions have a clear focus, and each session builds on the previous one in contributing to the accomplishment of the overall goals."[40] Charles Kollar adds that "The counselor's primary responsibility will be to highlight, support, and consolidate gains, turning a spotlight on any reported change."[41]

5. Homework Given Between Sessions

Pastoral counseling must be homework based as this often helps make progress in addressing the presenting problem. As Howard Clinebell states, encouraging the counselee to join a support group of others going through a similar challenge, may help him or her.[42] As per David Benner's suggestion, having the counselee reflect on the most recent counseling session, and come prepared to the next session ready to share what was helpful and what was not, is

39. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 56.

40. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 57.

41. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 179.

42. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 132.

beneficial to the counseling process as well.[43]

6. Pastoral Counseling is Church Based

Pastoral counseling must be church based. As William Hulme shares, pastoral counseling is organically related to a worshipping and witnessing community.[44] Having mentoring, and support groups, are ways the church can offer support to counselees who struggle with different issues. These opportunities allow the church to play a part in helping counselees experience healing.

7. Pastoral Counseling is Spiritually Focused

Pastoral counseling must be spiritually focused. The pastoral counselor needs to look for ways which God is active in the congregant's life. Then the pastoral counselor needs to assess how the congregant is responding to this. As William Hulme states, "As a power for change, this faith is based on the Good News of God's unconditional love revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ."[45]

8. Pastoral Counseling is Explicitly Christian

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43. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 58-59.

44. William E. Hulme, *Pastoral Care & Counseling: Using the Unique Resources of the Christian Tradition (*Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981), 30.

45. Hulme, *Pastoral Care & Counseling,* 30.

Pastoral counseling is explicitly Christian counseling. Pastoral counseling is the facilitation and interaction that are designed to nurture life and heal in and through the Holy Spirit. As David Benner writes, given this, the pastor can relax knowing that the ultimate responsibility for the congregant's healing lies with God.[46] Scripture is utilized during pastoral counseling, and LeRoy Aden and J. Ellens share, "The Bible is a change agent because it discloses a world in which God is actively engaged. This disclosure challenges us to perceive our situation in terms not only of what is happening, humanly speaking, but also of what may be happening: divine activity."[47]

Chapter 3 was a literature review of the main resources used today to explain the role of pastor and the pastoral counseling process. These resources were also used in this thesis-project to help further the understanding of the role of pastors and an effective pastoral counseling process. This literature review was discussed as it relates to the seven principles which were gleaned from reading and studying for this thesis-project. The first six principles help the reader understand the importance of why the pastor needs to do pastoral counseling. The seventh principle helps the reader understand eight elements of an effective process for the pastor to utilize when doing pastoral counseling.

Chapter 4 will contain seven pastoral counseling training principles. These principles will be used to train the five pastors on staff at the church I serve on the necessity for doing pastoral counseling, as well as on the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling

46. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 67-68.

47. LeRoy Aden & J. Harold Ellens, *The Church and Pastoral Care (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 53-54.

process. The hope is, that this training will encourage the pastors to fully carry out the pastoral counseling part of their role, if they currently are not, and adopt the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process in which they will receive training. Chapter 5 will recap the impact this training has had on the pastoral staff of the church I serve, to see if they benefited from understanding the importance of why they are to do pastoral counseling, and if the eight elements of a pastoral counseling process will help them be more effective and fully carry out the pastoral counseling part of their role.

CHAPTER FOUR

7 PASTORAL COUNSELING TRAINING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

This thesis-project focuses on training pastors on seven principles to enhance their pastoral counseling. I implemented this training at Colonial Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. On July 25, 2022, and August 15, 2022, I trained at our church in two one-hour sessions, four of the pastors on staff at the church where I serve. On August 25, 2022, I trained the fifth pastor at our church. One pastor was not able to participate as he was on sabbatical leave. The goal of this training is to equip pastors to fully engage congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to them 1) not feeling equipped to help others, 2) avoiding counseling and quickly refer congregants to professional counselors, or 3) do just enough to get by so they can say they are doing pastoral counseling. As stated in Chapter 2, the first objective of this training is that pastors will receive training on reasons why they need to do pastoral counseling, which are contained in principles one through six. Pastors need to understand and be convicted by scripture, and other reasons, to fully conduct the counseling part of their pastoral care role. The second objective of this training is that pastors will receive training on how to do pastoral counseling more effectively and efficiently, as they learn the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process, which are contained in principle seven.

The following information is a summarized version of the training presented, including the actual seminar content. At the start of the training time, I gave each of the pastors the

"Training Guide: Outline of 7 Principles".[1] This outline of the training on the seven principles is a guide for them to use throughout the training, so they can have an outline summary of the content presented and can write additional notes under each principle. In the first training session, we focused on pastoral counseling education consisting of the first six principles, which begin by explaining biblically the characteristics of pastors and their role and concludes with scripture's call for them to fully conduct the counseling part of their role. In the second training session, we focused on learning about referring congregants, as well as, the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process, which if implemented, can make the counseling part of the pastor's care role more effective and efficient, given all the other responsibilities of their position.

Before we began our training, we needed the Holy Spirit to help us open our minds and our hearts to what we were going to hear and learn, so we started with the prayer which follows next. Lord, as your followers, we want to do those things that you want us to do. Help each of us during this training, to understand why pastors need to do pastoral counseling, and teach us how pastors can approach counseling others as we examine the eight elements of a pastoral counseling process. Lord, as we study these two important items, some pastors may have this part of their ministry working well, and others may not. Lord, in this aspect of pastoral ministry, encourage pastors who need encouraging, and convict pastors who need convicting. We pray all this in your name, Lord. Amen.

Now that we prayed and asked God to help us during our training, we started by looking at scripture next, which gives us the first principle of our training. We have located the subject

1. See Appendix C. Training Guide: Outline Of 7 Principles.

of this work, pastoral counseling, within the biblical and theological framework of the Bible's teaching on elders as shepherds. In the Evangelical Presbyterian Church pastors are Teaching Elders. Scripture calls elders to have three characteristics which describe a pastor's role. By studying these three characteristics, which describe the pastor's role according to scripture, one can see it is important for pastors to fully conduct the pastoral counseling part of his or her position. We looked at scripture and these three characteristics next.

Principle #1: Three Characteristics of an Elder

To understand the role of a pastor, one needs to turn to scripture. 1 Peter 5:1-4 explains what it means to shepherd the flock of God. This passage gives us three characteristics, which describe the pastor's role. Next, we will look at each of the three characteristics of a pastor from this passage and they are: elders have a relationship with Christ; elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading, caring; and elders please Christ.

Elder Has a Relationship with Christ

The first characteristic of an elder is that the elder has a personal and growing relationship with Christ. 1 Peter 5:1 states: "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:"[2] Here Peter is focusing on the elders. Peter says I come not just as an apostle, like he states in 1 Peter 1:1, but as a fellow elder to other elders, as opposed to him being superior to

2. 1 Peter 5:1.

them. Wayne Grudem expands this concept of what it means to be a fellow elder when he states, "Peter immediately classes himself with the elders: *as a* fellow *elder*. This lets the elders know that he thinks of himself as one of those with whom judgment will begin—even he, an apostle, is not exempt, nor should any among his readers think themselves too important or too sanctified to be exempt."[3] When Peter calls himself a "fellow elder" in verse 1, it means that Peter is not superior to the elders he is writing to, and he too, like them, is one of those with whom judgement will begin, even though he is an apostle.

In verse 1, elders have a personal and growing relationship with Christ as they are fellow elders. Peter had a personal relationship with the suffering and risen Christ and elders are to have this as well. When Peter states "witness of the sufferings of Christ", both the elders to whom Peter is writing to, and for Peter, is the role of being a witness, who proclaim the sufferings of Christ to the world, and those who give witness to Jesus' sufferings should be prepared to share in those sufferings.

Peter came as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed. Wayne Grudem notes, "The fact that Peter is also a *partaker in the glory that is to be revealed* shows that full restoration from sin is certainly available through Christ."[4] Wayne Grudem later continues, "Peter is an 'elder' who has sinned, repented, been restored, and will share with Christ in glory. He can rightly 'exhort' any elder in whose life there is sin likewise to repent and be restored before God's disciplinary refining fire reaches him."[5] When Peter states "partaker in the glory

3. Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 193.

4. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 193.

5. Grudem, *1 Peter*, 194.

that is going to be revealed," both the elders to whom Peter is writing to, and for Peter, is the role of being a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed, as they have sinned, so they need to repent, and be restored, and they will share with Christ in glory.

Peter writes as an elder who had a personal and growing relationship with Christ. Elders should always be growing in their knowledge of God and living out his ways. All this is summed up in 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[6] Now that we have looked at the first characteristic of a pastor, that they have a personal and growing relationship with Christ, let us now look at the second characteristic which is pastors shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading, and caring.

Elder Shepherds the Flock Utilizing Three Disciplines

The second characteristic of an elder is that the elder shepherds their flock of people utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading and caring. 1 Peter 5:2 and 3 state: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."[7] Thomas Schreiner explains that "The task of the elders is now explained. They are to function as shepherds of God's flock. They are not to be like the shepherds indicated in Ezekiel 34 who treated their flock 'harshly and brutally' (34:4),

6. 2 Peter 3:18.

7. 1 Peter 5:2-3.

who cared only for themselves (34:8)."[8] Jesus graciously comes to Peter and says, "shepherd my sheep." And now Peter is pleading to the elders to shepherd the flock of God that is among you.

Elders are to, according to 1 Peter 5:2, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight. According to R. C. Sproul, "exercising oversight" or "watching over them" comes from the Greek verb, episkopos. We get the word episcopal from that, and this is a bishop, in other words, an overseer, a superintendent one who exercises oversight.[9] As an elder/leader you lead your followers to be like Christ and you see the results of your leading as the individuals in your flock of people become more like Christ. Pastors shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines and the first one of those is preaching. Let us look at that next.

Preaching

Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the first discipline which is preaching. Elders are to feed, or preach to, their flock of people, as the food the sheep need is the Word of God applied to their lives. Jesus, after His resurrection, asked Peter three times, if he loved him. And Peter responded, yes, Lord, I love you. Then Jesus told him to feed my sheep. That is what elders do—they feed their flock of people. Eugene Stowe adds to this thought, "Well-fed flocks do not fall prey to the biting winds of adversity or sicken and die like those who spiritual resistance has dropped to a dangerously low level. Such pulpit fare is the most effective

8. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude,* The New American Commentary*,* vol. 37, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 205.

9. R. C. Sproul, *1-2 Peter: An Expositional Commentary*, (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019), 159.

preventive medicine for the soul."[10] Pastors need to make sure their congregation is well fed through the preaching of the whole counsel of the Word of God. Feeding is preaching God's word, and Sam Chan adds, "on behalf of God with the divinely commissioned intention that the hearer hears God's message and responds to God in faith and obedience."[11] Preaching involves conveying a message from God and hearers hear God's message and respond to God in faith and obedience. Pastors shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines and the first one of those is preaching, which we just examined. The second discipline is leading. Let us look at that next.

Leading

Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the second discipline which is leading. Timothy Laniak states, "The promised shepherds (elders) are those who will lead 'with knowledge and understanding'. A shepherd needs God's heart, but also a sharp, godly mind. The challenges of leadership require deep reservoirs of discernment and wisdom."[12] 1 Peter 5:2 begins with: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight"[13] . Timothy Laniak states, "a good shepherd is one who sees what the Owner (God) sees and does what the Owner (God) does. He is a follower *before* he is a leader. He is a leader *because* he is a

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10. Eugene L. Stowe, *The Ministry of Shepherding: A Study of Pastoral Practice* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1976), 64.

11. Sam Chan, *Preaching as the Word of God: Answering an Old Question with Speech-Act Theory* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 152-153.

12. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible (*Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 22.

13. 1 Peter 5:2a.

follower."[14] Elders are leaders of God's people, so they are, "under-shepherds of God the Great Shepherd".[15]

A pastor leads by taking the time to guide and supervise his or her congregants. Deron Biles states, "The absence of shepherd leadership results in wandering, unsafe, confused, and hungry sheep. The Lord identified this problem in Ezekiel 34:21, noting that the shepherd's attempts at leadership consisted of trying to push the sheep around rather than leading them. But one does not lead from behind. You do not drive sheep; you lead them. You do not shoo them, you woo them."[16] Congregants need their pastor to be present in their lives so he or she can encourage them and help lead and guide them in God's ways. Pastors shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines and the first one of those is preaching, the second one of those is leading, which we just examined. The third discipline is caring. Let us look at that next.

Caring

Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the third discipline which is caring. An elder is someone who looks out for their flock of people, and assesses what they need, and provides for them. As Timothy Laniak states, the elder's "appointment by God implies calling, stewardship and accountability. This short promise also speaks of a capacity to care for God's flock with self-sacrificing diligence and compassion."[17] The first reason why pastors need to

14. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart*, 22.

15. Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter.* Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 305.

16. Deron J. Biles, *Pastoral Ministry: The Ministry of a Shepherd* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), 24.

17. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart*, 22.

fully engage in pastoral counseling is because an important facet of caring for people is counseling them. There are faithful elders, and there are unfaithful elders. According to Ezekiel 34, unfaithful shepherds: feed themselves and not the sheep; allow the sheep to scatter and then they do not pursue the sheep; and they rule over the sheep with force and harshness. And then Ezekiel 34 reverses it and says the shepherds of Israel are unfaithful, but the Lord God, the faithful Shepherd, will care for the sheep as He will feed, and gather, and protect the sheep. We need to be faithful elders who care for our flock of people. Elders need to care for their flock of people by providing pastoral care and pastoral counseling for them when they are in need.

How effective is the pastor at caring for your people by counseling them? The effectiveness as a pastoral counselor is more about ushering people into the healing presence of God, the best counselor of all, than it is about skillful implementation of counseling techniques. David Benner articulates this well when he states, "The essence of pastoral counseling is helping troubled people bring their woundedness, struggles, doubts, and anxieties into dynamic healing contact with the God who is known by his people as the wonderful Counselor. This is the most important thing a pastor can do."[18] David Benner continues, "The help that pastors provide is not primarily related to their ability to produce sophisticated formulations of the nature of the problem or to their skillful implementation of counseling techniques and interventions."[19] This would take a lot of training and education and practice for a pastor to master, resulting in him or her not focusing on other aspects of their pastorate.

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18. David C. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 40.

19. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

David Benner continues, "Rather, it is primarily a result of their ability to mediate God's presence to the people who consult them. Through their words and their being, they should move people toward a closer contact with the God who heals, sustains, guides, reconciles, and nurtures his people."[20] Pastors need to be about this, and do this well, so that the people coming for help encounter the best healer of all, God.

When elders shepherd the flock, Peter informs us of three ways they should go about this. 1 Peter 5:2-3 states: "…exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."[21] First, elders need to shepherd the flock not under compulsion, but willingly, such that elders want to serve and are not doing their role simply out of obligation. I. Howard Marshall adds, "A person who is appointed as a leader (elder) must do his job not simply because he has been so appointed—and therefore halfheartedly—but from a real desire to serve."[22] Second, elders need to shepherd the flock not for shameful gain, but eagerly, such that elders focus on serving others in the flock and not on being served, and in their serving they guard against shameful gain of power, prestige, and/or acceptance. Elders need to shepherd the flock and not build a name for themselves. Third, elders need to shepherd the flock not domineering over those in their charge, but being examples to them, such that elders are to govern in the church not by intimidating others, but by the power of

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20. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

21. 1 Peter 5:2b-3.

22. I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter.* The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 162-163.

their example, striving to make their life a Godly model to follow. We have looked at the first two characteristics of a pastor from this passage and they are: elders have a relationship with Christ and elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading, caring. Next, let us look at the third characteristic of a pastor from this passage and that is elders please Christ.

Elder Pleases Christ

The third characteristic of an elder is that the elder has hope and a powerful desire to please Christ. 1 Peter 5:4 states: "And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."[23] Elders shepherd the flock willingly and eagerly, and elders will receive the crown of glory when Christ appears during his second coming. Timothy Laniak states, "The 'crown of glory' reinforces an important theme in 1 Peter…the suffering of the great Shepherd led ultimately to his glory. That glory will be shared by those who suffer with him, like him and for him. A deferred reward will vindicate all those who are identified with the sacrificial lamb."[24] Elders are under the Chief Shepherd's, Jesus', authority. God has placed elders in life to speak the words of God and shepherd God's people. Elders have hope and a powerful desire to please Christ because they love Jesus and follow his ways.

We have located the subject of this thesis-project, pastoral counseling, within the biblical and theological framework of the Bible's teaching on elders as shepherds. The hope is, that after having examined 1 Peter 5:1-4, this will help pastors begin to understand, and be

23. 1 Peter 5:4.

24. Laniak, *Shepherds after My own Heart*, 234.

convicted of scripture's call, for them to fully conduct the counseling part of their pastoral care role. Now we will look at six more principles for why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling with their congregants. The next principle in this training is people approach pastors for help.

Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help

Pastors need to be prepared to provide pastoral counseling to congregants who come for help with their personal problems. A second reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because people turn to pastors, more than any other helping profession, to get help for their issues. As David Benner shares,

> In an important and now quite well-known study conducted in 1957, 42 percent of Americans reported that when facing a significant personal problem, a minister is the first person they would consult when seeking help. A family physician was preferred by 29 percent of the sample (Gurin, Verhoff, and Feld 1960). When this study was replicated in 1976, ministers were still the most preferred group of helpers, chosen by 39 percent of the people (Verhoff, Kukla, and Dorran 1981). The second most popular professional group at this time was psychologists and psychiatrists, who were chosen by 29 percent of the sample. Nonpsychiatric physicians dropped to third place, being the first choice of 21 percent of the people.
>
> These statistics demonstrate that in spite of what often seems to be a diminishing sphere of influence for the church in society, a considerably higher percentage of people go to the clergy for help with personal problems than to any other helping profession. And they make this choice because of the clergy's role as representatives of the Christian church who bring both a Christian perspective and unique Christian healing resources to their work as counselors.[25]

Also, Brian Childs agrees and further states,

> Though there are a plethora of mental health practitioners available to most people, particularly those who live in or near large metropolitan areas, people still go to pastors. Just as important, pastors have an entre to people that most mental health

25. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 33-34.

> professionals do not have. Masters and Johnson tell us that 70 percent of all the people who consulted their foundation had at one time or another also consulted a minister about their problem. While I think this is a surprisingly high percentage of people underscores a point. People go to pastors for help.[26]

The next principle in this training is pastoral counseling helps meet people's needs.

Principle #3: Pastoral Counseling Helps Meet People's Needs

In addition to people turning to pastors for help, Howard Clinebell adds, pastoral care and counseling are among the most effective instruments by which pastors meet congregant's needs in our rapidly changing society.[27] A third reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because having a well-defined pastoral counseling process containing eight essential elements helps pastors more efficiently and effectively meet people's needs. Pastors need to be equipped and ready for this. The next principle in this training is pastors are experts.

Principle #4: Pastors are Experts

A fourth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because they are experts, in the counseling they provide, because they can see how the Holy Spirit is at work in a person and knowing this can assist in helping the counselee get the help they need. Pastors speak God's Word to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help. Counseling that is

26. Brian H. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling: A Guide (*Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 19-20.

27. Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth (*Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 2.

not pastoral, does not require that God's Word is spoken to the specific life experiences of the person seeking help. David Benner makes this point when he states, "The importance of pastoral care and counseling is grounded in the centrality of the proclamation of the Word of God in Christian ministry."[28] David Benner adds,

> Ministers are the only counseling professionals who routinely have training in systematic theology, biblical studies, ethics, and church history, and this framework of understanding gives pastoral counselors an invaluable perspective on those seeking their help. What a shame, therefore, when ministers abandon this perspective for a psychological one, judging the latter to be superior or more prestigious.[29]

Charles Kollar adds to this discussion of pastors being experts when he states, "It seems to me, however, that pastors often see themselves as capable only of assisting a person with salvation and engaging him in training and discipleship. After all, serious problems must be entrusted to an expert. How have we become convinced of this?"[30] Charles Kollar further states,

> Of course, it is true that a pastor is an inadequate counselor—if he *must* be an expert on emotional problems to be effective. But must a counselor be an expert? The apostle Paul wrote that God is already at work in the counselee (2 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). He is a letter from Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God, not on a tablet of stone but on a tablet of a human heart (2 Corinthians 3:3). I believe the counselor's task is to look for this *writing of the Spirit* in the counselee's life, rather than concentrating on present or past problems. This is what ministers *are* experts at doing.[31]

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28. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 9.

29. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 31-32.

30. Kollar, Charles Allen, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach For Getting People Back on Track* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 21.

31. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling,* 21-22.

Pastors are experts because pastors can see how the Holy Spirit is at work in a person. Knowing this, can assist in helping the counselee get the help they need. The next principle in this training is defining pastoral counseling.

Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling

A fifth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because unlike other counseling, during pastoral counseling the pastor connects God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselees' life and experiences. This principle gets to the heart of the matter of why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling, and why pastors may begin to value their time more allocated for pastoral counseling as opposed to planning, staff meetings, sermon preparation, etc. It is helpful to define what pastoral counseling is since there are many types of counseling resources today. Wayne Oates writes, "…that person's counseling becomes pastoral when the counselee or the counselor focuses the relationship upon the relation of God to the process of their lives."[32] To add to this definition, David Benner writes, "Pastoral counseling involves the establishment of a time-limited relationship that is structured to provide comfort for the troubled persons by enhancing their awareness of God's grace and faithful presence and thereby increasing their ability to live their lives more fully in the light of these realizations."[33] And to finally add one more focus to our definition, Wayne Oates writes, "As the report of the Commission on the Ministry of the New York Academy of Sciences puts it, 'The clergyman always sees God as a partner in the counseling process…and feels rather

32. Wayne E. Oates, *Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1974), 11.

33. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 40.

hesitant in attributing to his own efforts whatever success may be achieved.'"[34] One can ascertain then that during pastoral counseling the pastor works diligently to connect God, the greatest healer, to the counselee's life and their experiences. The next principle in this training is understanding that pastors need to fulfill their role.

Principle #6: Pastors Need to Fulfill Their Role

A sixth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because this is an important way to care for people, and caring for people, as was learned earlier when examining 1 Peter 5:1-4, is one of the three main functions of the pastor's role. When I asked the Dean of my doctoral program, Dr. David Currie, why my degree focuses on three areas, preaching, leadership, and pastoral care/counseling, he stated that Dr. Kenneth Swetland, one of his mentors, thought that these are the three main functions of pastoral ministry. My church's pastoral team is focused on preaching/teaching, and leading our ministries, as well as performing the necessary pastoral care/counseling that comes their way. Of these three main functions, however, a hunch is that less than a third of our pastoral team's time is focused on pastoral care/counseling. Now that we know biblically that pastoral care/counseling is part of our role as pastors, we need to make sure we are fully engaged in this aspect of our role. The final principle for this training is for pastors to learn the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process so pastors can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling.

34. Wayne E. Oates, *Protestant Pastoral Counseling* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1952), 58. ("The Findings of the Commission in the Ministry," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 63, Article 3, November 7, 1955, 428.).

Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process

This final principle shows pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having the following eight elements included in their pastoral counseling process. It is important for pastors to have a well-defined pastoral counseling process. Not only does a counseling process help guide pastors to be more efficient and effective when counseling others, but additionally, when their counseling process is communicated to the congregation, it benefits the congregants as well. This allows the congregants to know how their pastors may help them by understanding what the counseling process will be. This will then allow the congregants to be more informed as they compare it to what they may receive as support from a counselor outside the church.

Referring Congregants

Before diving into the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process, it is important to share briefly about referring congregants. Pastors need to refer congregants who bring complex issues, for example, working on changing underlying personality structures or resolving deep-seated unconscious problems and conflicts, since pastors are not equipped to help with these issues, but psychotherapists are. Brian Childs mentioned, referring congregants is sometimes needed when he stated: "The problem presented by the client is so complex or so far out of the experience and expertise of the pastor that adequate counseling would be difficult."[35] This is especially true with difficult cases as some congregants will bring issues that

35. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 86.

only those trained in psychotherapy should be overseeing, for example, working on changing underlying personality issues, or deep-seated conflicts. In these situations, according to the training content, it is recommended that one refer the counselee. Now let us look at the eight elements of the pastoral counseling process.

Eight Elements of the Pastoral Counseling Process

There are eight elements to an effective pastoral counseling process. Before reviewing the eight elements, the following caution is in order. "As is true of using any caregiving model, it should be applied flexibly using only the procedures that seem relevant to the flow of helping relationships with particular counselees."[36] The first element to the pastoral counseling process is the intake meeting where the counselee describes his or her problem. Let us look at that next.

1. Intake Meeting Where Counselee Describes Problem

This first element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by understanding the counselee's one main presenting problem and setting the boundaries for the counseling relationship by sharing the pastoral counseling process. Brian Childs shares how the pastor's first task in the counseling process is to do a diagnostic or evaluation interview. During the start of this interview, the pastor is focused on putting the counselee at ease. When striving to put the counselee at ease, Brian Childs

36. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 125.

comments, “It lets the counselees know that you are interested in them as whole persons and not just with their problems; that you have some notion of where they have been and who they are because you have shared similar experiences.”[37] Howard Clinebell adds, “This encourages burdened people to express and talk through their feelings and share salient facts about their situation.”[38] Then, the pastor asks the counselee what they would like to share with with him or her. Howard Clinebell continues, if the counselee is “disturbed psychologically or for other reasons is in need of psychotherapeutic, medical, psychiatric, or help from a specialized agency, if this appears to be the case, begin immediately the process of an effective referral.”[39] A pastor counselor understands the counselee’s one main presenting problem and then shares his or her pastoral counseling process with the counselee. The second element to the pastoral counseling process is to allow a maximum of five one-hour sessions for the counseling process. Let us look at that next.

2. Maximum of Five One-hour Sessions

The second element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by addressing the one presenting problem in a brief and time-limited manner by having it completed in a maximum of five sessions. David Benner states that research shows “that 87 percent of the pastoral counseling conducted by pastors in general ministry involves five or fewer sessions. The suggested maximum number of sessions

37. Childs, *Short-Term Pastoral Counseling*, 61.

38. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 123.

39. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 123.

for strategic pastoral counseling, therefore, is five."[40] David Benner explains that given that there are a maximum of five sessions, the pastor needs to help the congregant focus on working on the one main presenting problem. The pastor needs to direct the content and the process of the sessions, while attending to the congregant and the Holy Spirit. If more than five sessions are needed, then the pastor needs to refer the parishioner to a professional counselor.[41] The third element to the pastoral counseling process is that the process must be holistic. Let us look at that next.

3. Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements

The third element informs pastors how they can be more effective and complete in their pastoral counseling by having it be holistic as it focuses on the congregant's affective (feeling), cognitive (thought), and behavioral (action) elements of functioning. Pastoral counseling must be holistic. According to David Benner, the pastor needs to focus on the congregant's affective (feeling), cognitive (thought), and behavioral (action) elements of functioning, and not just focus on one, or a couple of these elements. This approach differs from counseling that focuses on only one of these elements, for example, cognitive therapists who focus on thinking, or behavioral therapists who focus on behavior. The pastor counselor focuses on all three of these elements so that he or she can have a more complete assessment and effective intervention.[42] The fourth element to the pastoral counseling process

40. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 48.

41. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 48-54.

42. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 56.

is that it must be structured. Let us look at that next.

4. Counseling is Structured

The fourth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by structuring the counseling sessions so that each session has a clear focus, and each session builds on the previous one as the pastor addresses the one presenting problem. Pastoral counseling must be structured. The general structural pattern is during the first three or four sessions, the pastor will explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with their one main presenting problem, as well as brainstorm and explore some possible changes in counselee's life that might help with addressing or coping with his or her presenting problem. During the last session or two, the pastor and congregant will discuss the progress they have made in addressing the congregant's presenting problem, and share what remains to be addressed, and decide if a referral is needed. They will then bring closure to the counseling relationship at the close of the fifth session. David Benner shares how "Each of the sessions has a clear focus, and each session builds on the previous one in contributing to the accomplishment of the overall goals."[43] Charles Kollar adds that "The counselor evaluates the counselee's progress. The counselor's primary responsibility will be to highlight, support, and consolidate gains, turning a spotlight on any reported change."[44]The fifth element to the pastoral counseling process is that homework

43. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 57.

44. Kollar, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, 179.

is given between sessions. Let us look at that next.

5. Homework Given Between Sessions

The fifth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient doing pastoral counseling by having the counseling be homework based, as the pastor assigns homework to the congregant between the sessions which helps keep the momentum moving forward as the pastor and the congregant work together on her or his presenting problem. Homework assigned by the pastor to help the counselee understand the issues being explored for their one presenting problem can take many forms such as: reading books, the Bible, and/or devotional literature; practicing skills, like expressing emotions; journaling thoughts, feelings, and behaviors basis an experience; and sharing with others what he or she is learning.[45] Other ideas are like what Howard Clinebell shares, encouraging the counselee to join a support group of others going through a similar challenge, may help him or her.[46] One helpful homework assignment, like David Benner suggests, is having the counselee reflect on the most recent counseling session, and come prepared to the next session ready to share what was helpful and what was not, is beneficial to the counseling process as well.[47] The sixth element to the pastoral counseling process is that the process must be church based. Let us look at that next.

6. Pastoral Counseling is Church based

45. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 58-59.

46. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 132.

47. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 59.

The sixth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be church based. This is where the church offers support groups for different issues, for example, addiction, divorce, and job transitions, with which congregants may be struggling, so that those who are undergoing pastoral counseling, will have the opportunity to move into a support group for portions of the help they need. As William Hulme shares, pastoral counseling is organically related to a worshipping and witnessing community.[48] Another aspect of being church based is having congregants be mentors to the counselees. It was suggested by David Benner that it may be helpful to connect a congregant in counseling with another person in the church who may be able to provide some of the help the congregant needs, for example, day care, transportation, financial planning, or home repair.[49] The seventh element to the pastoral counseling process is that the process must be spiritually focused. Let us look at that next.

7. Pastoral Counseling is Spiritually Focused

The seventh element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be spiritually focused, as they look for ways which God is active in the congregant's life and how the congregant is responding to this, to see how he or she can turn to God for help to address the issue. When the congregant shares his or her story about the one presenting problem, the pastoral counselor needs to be listening for

48. William E. Hulme, *Pastoral Care & Counseling: Using the Unique Resources of the Christian Tradition (*Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981), 30.

49. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 61.

the person's spiritual response to this issue. Some possible spiritual responses toward God about his or her issue might be one of the following: some trust but with a failure to expect much of God; or doubt, anger, confusion, or despair; or God is seen as irrelevant to this issue. The spiritual response will be discernable to the pastor who is listening closely to the congregant's story.[50] As Benner shares, the pastoral counselor needs to be aware of the congregant's spiritual response to their issue, in other words, does he or she have faith in God to help them with addressing and be healed from the issue?[51] As William Hulme states, "As a power for change, this faith is based on the Good News of God's unconditional love revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ."[52] The eighth and final element to the pastoral counseling process is that the process must be explicitly Christian. Let us look at that next.

8. Pastoral Counseling is Explicitly Christian

The eighth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be explicitly Christian, where the facilitation and interaction are designed to nurture life and heal in and through the Holy Spirit. Pastoral counseling is Christian since it relies on the Holy Spirt, who guides the counseling and brings healing to the counselee. As David Benner writes, given that all healing and growth are

50. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 66.

51. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 63-67.

52. Hulme, *Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 30.

ultimately from God, the pastor can relax in the counseling knowing that the ultimate responsibility for the congregant's healing lies with God.[53] Some of the other ways pastoral counseling is made explicitly Christian is by sensitively and wisely using prayer, the sacraments, and Scripture as these can bring the counselee more closely in touch with God who is the source of all life, growth, and healing.[54] When Scripture is utilized during pastoral counseling, LeRoy Aden and J. Ellens share, "The Bible is a change agent because it discloses a world in which God is actively engaged. This disclosure challenges us to perceive our situation in terms not only of what is happening, humanly speaking, but also of what may be happening: divine activity."[55]

To end the training, I am going to share with you a conversation I had with a man I counseled. Having incorporated the above seven principles into our time together, near the end of our last session, this counselee, who was clearly healed, began giving me credit for helping and healing him. I shared with him that God gets all the credit for helping and healing him. I stated that my role is to usher him into the Lord's presence, but it is the Holy Spirit's role to do the helping and healing. He said, okay. He continued by stating that he has never encountered the presence of the Lord and the power of relating God's Word to his issue, like he did in our counseling—except a few times when he was listening to some sermons preached. Like preaching, pastoral counseling is another very important avenue to utilize to usher individuals into God's presence and relate God's Word to their lives and to their specific issues,

53. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 67-68.

54. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling,* 67.

55. LeRoy Aden & J. Harold Ellens, *The Church and Pastoral Care (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 53-54.

so they may experience God and God's healing touch. God has given pastors the responsibility and privilege to do pastoral counseling, so pastors need to fully pursue this in their roles!

This training, which consists of seven principles, was designed to help pastors: first, be convicted by scripture, and additionally by other reasons, to fully carry out the counseling part of their pastoral care role; and second, be trained on the eight elements of an effective, pastoral counseling process which if implemented in their ministry can make the counseling part of their pastoral care role more effective and manageable, given all the other responsibilities of their position. Hopefully, this training will help equip the pastors to fully engage their congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to the pastors not feeling equipped to help, and they instead, either avoid doing much pastoral counseling, or they quickly, in the process, refer congregants to professional counselors. Chapter 5 will share the impact this training had on the pastoral staff of the church I serve to see if they benefited from understanding the importance of doing pastoral counseling, and if the eight elements to a pastoral counseling process will help them be more effective in doing pastoral counseling.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAINING ENCOURAGES PASTORAL COUNSELING

Introduction

This training project consists of educating five pastors on seven principles to enhance their pastoral counseling. I implemented this training project at Colonial Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. As stated in Chapter 4, in July and August 2022, I trained at our church, five of the pastors on staff at the church where I serve. One pastor was not able to participate as he was on sabbatical leave.

The goal of this training is to equip pastors to engage more fully, congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to them 1) not feeling equipped to help others, 2) avoiding counseling and quickly refer congregants to professional counselors, or 3) do just enough to get by so they can say they are doing pastoral counseling. As stated in Chapter 2, the first objective of this training project is that pastors will receive training on reasons why they need to do pastoral counseling, which are contained in principles one through six. Pastors need to understand and be convicted by scripture, and other reasons, to fully conduct the counseling part of their pastoral care role. The second objective of this training project is that pastors will receive training on how to do pastoral counseling more effectively and efficiently, as they learn the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process, which are contained in principle seven. To measure the effectiveness of this training on these seven principles, a pre-training survey and a post-training survey were utilized, as well as a post-training focus group using a focus group questionnaire. A lay leader from my church was recruited to be a note-taker of the

pastors' responses during the Focus Group, which allowed me to direct my attention on facilitating the conversation with the pastors. Based on the following data analysis, both the first and second objectives of this training project were met, and the training goal was achieved.

Data Analysis

In this section, is some general information about the five pastors which were trained during this project. This information was collected when the Pre-Training Survey was administered with the pastors. After this, the data collected from the Pre-Training and the Post-Training Surveys were analyzed to see if there were findings, and any findings were reported. Then, a comparison of the Pre-Training Survey results to the Post-Training Survey results was had to see what kind of impact, if any, the training had on the five pastors, and any findings were reported. After having administered the Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey and harvested the results from both, the last research tool utilized for this thesis-project was the Post-Training Focus Group. To aid in facilitating the Focus Group and collecting the research data, the Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire was prepared and utilized during the Focus Group.[1] Throughout the data analysis, I shared the questions I asked of the pastors in the Focus Group, and the pastors' responses to these questions, with the goal to understand more about each of the findings, and any additional information discovered was reported.

General Information on the Five Pastors

1. See Appendix D. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire.

The following are two points of general information collected from the Pre-Training Survey, which was administered to each of the five pastors before I trained them. The first point is among the five pastors there is a good representation of years of ordained pastoral ministry experience, with some very seasoned, one with mid-range amount of experience, and some relatively new ordained pastors. Two out of the five pastors have served in ordained pastoral ministry for longer than twenty years. One out of the five pastors has served in ordained pastoral ministry for five to ten years. Two out of the five pastors have served for one to five years.[2] The second point is all five pastors perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties, so counseling is expected of each of them in their role.[3]

Five Findings from Pre-Training and Post-Training Surveys

Finding #1: Pastors Spend 5.5% of Their Time Counseling

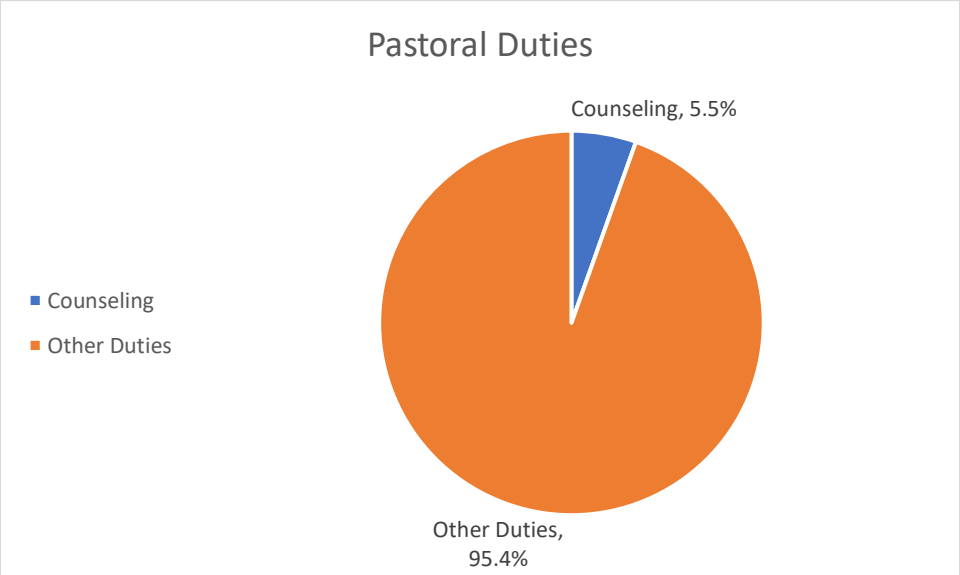
The first finding, which was discovered in the pastors' responses to the Pre-Training Survey, and further refined during the Focus Group, is all five pastors spend on average, only 5.5% of their work time doing pastoral counseling.[4] See Figure 1 below.

2. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 2 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey.

3. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 3 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey.

4. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 5 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 1 in Appendix H. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire And Responses.

FIGURE 1. *Pastoral Duties.*[5]



The five pastors' responses as to why this was the case, is explained in their replies to the following Focus Group Question 1 which states: "Why do you spend, on average with the other four pastors surveyed at our church, only 4.6 percent of your work time doing pastoral counseling?" To help the pastors in responding to this question, I re-read the Pre-Training Survey Question 5, which all five pastors had previously responded to, which states, "In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling?" and I shared how two pastors responded with 0 – 5 hours, and three pastors responded with 6 -10 hours.

Next, is a categorization and summary of the few main answers to this question that arose in our Focus Group discussion. First, two pastors answered this question by sharing they lacked training in pastoral counseling. One pastor shared he has been referring counselees too early, after only two or three sessions, instead of being more structured in his approach and

5. See Appendix G. Explanation Of Figures 1 Through 5.

allowing more sessions to explore the counselee's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with their one main presenting problem, as well as spending more time brainstorming and exploring some possible changes in the counselee's life that might help with addressing or coping with his or her presenting problem. The other pastor shared he had only two courses on counseling in seminary, and because of this, it is possible that he has subconsciously avoided a more thorough involvement in doing pastoral counseling, as this is a weakness for him due to lack of training.

Second, two pastors expressed in responding to this question that the congregation is not well informed about our church's pastoral counseling. These two pastors mentioned that an increase in the five pastors' work time spent doing counseling would most likely occur if it was made more widely known to the congregation what a congregant could expect for pastoral counseling with our church's pastoral staff. This is as opposed to the amount of time the five pastors spend doing counseling today, where they respond just to the congregants who approach them for counseling. Many of our church's congregants most likely are not familiar with what a pastor would do when counseling a congregant, verses what a congregant can expect from counselors outside the church.

As a sidebar, three of the pastors expressed in response to this question that they may have underestimated the hours they spend doing counseling. All five of them agreed in general that they tend to be toward the top end of the range of the survey's foil choice they selected in the Pre-Training Survey in terms of hours they spent doing pastoral counseling, so the maximum number of hours for the foil choice they selected was used in the summary calculations. One pastor mentioned he did not include in his survey response his calculation of

the informal and on-the-fly requests for conversations that can come up, and another pastor mentioned that his interpretation of counseling did not include time spent doing pastoral care or informal sessions that occur on the spur of the moment. As it was expressed and accepted in the Focus Group, these two pastors' responses, are other forms of pastoral care and connection and do not fit the definition of pastoral counseling. As stated earlier in Chapter 4, David Benner writes, "Pastoral counseling involves the establishment of a time-limited relationship that is structured to provide comfort for the troubled persons by enhancing their awareness of God's grace and faithful presence and thereby increasing their ability to live their lives more fully in the light of these realizations."[6] The third pastor had either misread or not responded correctly to the Pre-Training Survey Question 5. She was surprised at the response of the five pastors' average of only approximately 4.6% of their work time spent doing pastoral counseling. She estimates that she spends about 10% of her time doing counseling. Throughout the discussion of this first finding in this Focus Group, given that two of the other pastors openly shared that they checked the lowest number of hours response to this question in the Pre-Training Survey, and given that the other three pastors all checked the same choice, it was easy to discern what choice she selected on the Pre-Training Survey. So, I increased her time spent doing pastoral counseling from ten hours, at best, per month that I deduced she put on her Pre-Training Survey, to four hours per week, moving the five pastors' average time spent, at best, doing pastor counseling up from 4.6% to 5.5%.

In summary, the research shows the first finding which is the five pastors spend on

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6. David C. Benner, *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model (*Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 40.

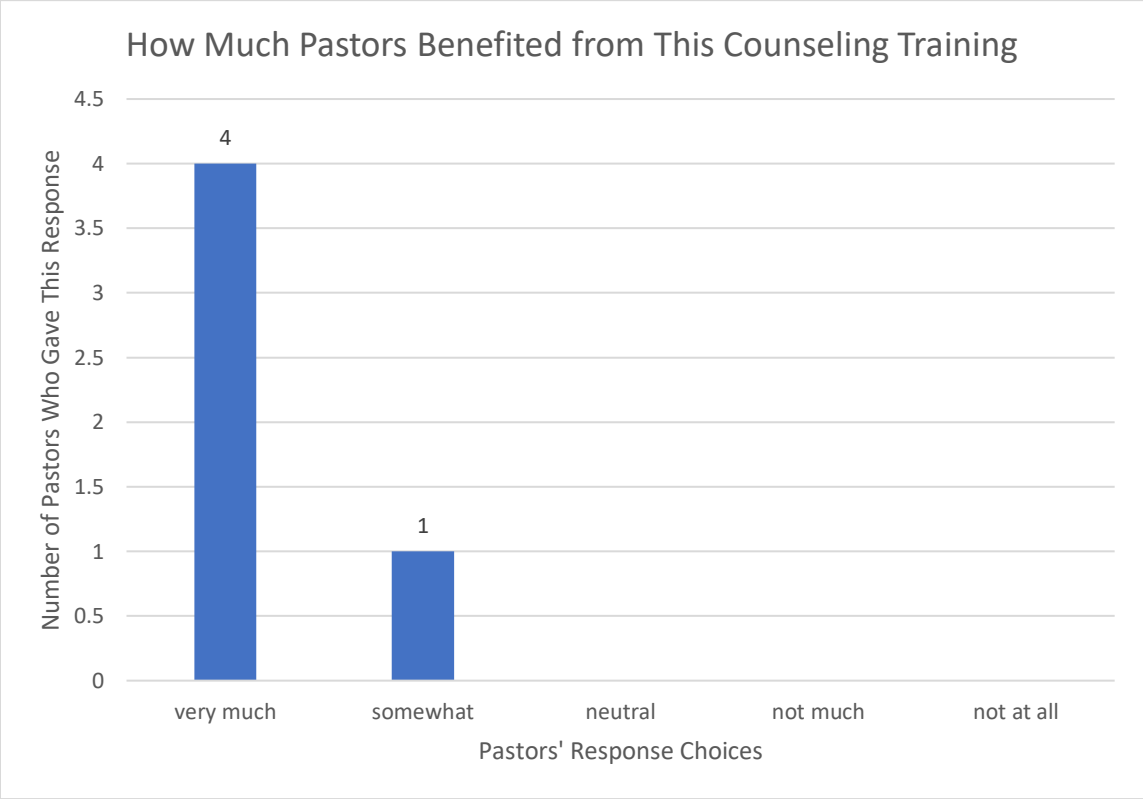
average 5.5% of their work time counseling congregants. The two reasons given by the pastors for this low percentage of their work time spent doing pastoral counseling is first, due to the pastors' lack of training in pastoral counseling, as they completed only a few classes in seminary on this pastoral duty, they do not feel well-equipped to do this part of their role. Second, the congregation is not well informed of our church's pastoral counseling opportunity, such that there are not more congregants wanting pastoral counseling, which if they were informed, would most likely increase the amount of work time pastors would be spending doing pastoral counseling.

Finding #2: Pastors Benefited from This Training

The second finding, which was discovered in the pastors' responses to the Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey, and further understood in greater detail during the Focus Group is all five pastors benefited from participating in this training.[7] See Figure 2 below.

7. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 8 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Questions 4 and 5 in Appendix F. Individual Responses To Anonymous Post-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Questions 2 and 3 in Appendix H. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire And Reponses.

FIGURE 2. *How Much Pastors Benefited from This Counseling Training*.[8]



On the Pre-Training Survey, Question 8, which states: "How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role?", all five of the pastors marked the highest rating which is very much. Then, on the Post-Training Survey, Question 4, which states: "How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role?", four of the pastors marked very much and one pastor marked somewhat. This is reflected in Figure 2 above. Then, on the Post-Training Survey, Question 5, the five pastors listed the top key learnings they each gained from the training. Four of the pastors listed their three key learnings, and one pastor listed his or her

8. See Appendix G. Explanation Of Figures 1 Through 5.

one key learning. The first pastor stated these three key learnings: 1) Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, specifically, Element 2, Maximum of Five One-hour Sessions, which encourages a maximum of five one-hour counseling sessions for each case, 2) pastors lack training in pastoral counseling, and 3) Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help. The second pastor stated these three key learnings: 1) Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, specifically, Element 2, Maximum of Five One-hour Sessions, which encourages a maximum of five one-hour counseling sessions for each case, 2) Principle #1: Pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because an important facet of caring for people is counseling them, and 3) Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help. The third pastor stated the following three key learnings: 1) Principle #1: Pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because an important facet of caring for people is counseling them, 2) Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling which states the pastor connects God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselee's life and experiences, and 3) Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, specifically, Element 3, Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements, which encourages counseling that is responsive to all three, the affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements of functioning. The fourth pastor stated these three key learnings: 1) Principle #1: Pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because an important facet of caring for people is counseling them, 2) Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling which states the pastor connects God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselee's life and experiences, and 3) Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, specifically, Element 6, Pastoral Counseling is Church based, reminding pastors of utilizing the appropriate support groups of the church to help the counselee address and get help with their one main presenting

problem. The fifth pastor stated this one key learning, Principle #3: Pastoral Counseling Helps Meet People's Needs.

Later, during the Focus Group, the pastors were asked Focus Group Question 2, which states: "Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide: Outline of 7 Principles, and share which one of the first six training principles, rose to the top for you when you were being trained on principles one through six of why you should do pastoral counseling? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?" In the paragraphs that follow, I will categorize and summarize the few main answers to this question that resulted in our Focus Group discussion.

First, two pastors stated that the one, of the first six training principles of why pastors should do pastoral counseling, that rose to the top for them was: Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling. To recap, this principle states that pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because unlike other counseling, during pastoral counseling the pastors connects God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselee's life and experiences. The pastors shared this principle has motivated them to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of their role, as they can now relax, knowing that their effectiveness as a counselor is on connecting the counselee to God, and not on their skillful implementation of counseling techniques.

Second, two pastors stated that the one, of the first six training principles of why pastors should do pastoral counseling, that rose to the top for them was: Principle #2: People

Approach Pastors for Help. To recap, this principle states that pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because people turn to pastors, more than any other helping profession, to get help with their issues. The pastors shared that this principle has motivated them to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of their role, as they are anticipating that they need to be ready to counsel people who come to them seeking help, and now they are equipped with a more efficient and effective counseling process after having considered the eight elements to an effective pastoral counseling process.

Third, one pastor stated that the one, of the first six training principles of why pastors should do pastoral counseling, that rose to the top for him was: Principle #3: Pastoral Counseling Helps Meet People's Needs. To recap, this principle shares that pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling and have a well-defined process containing the eight essential elements so they can more efficiently and effectively meet people's needs. The pastor shared that this principle has motivated him to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of his role, as he is now better equipped with a more efficient counseling process that can help meet more needs, after having considered the eight elements to an effective pastoral counseling process.

During the Focus Group, the pastors were then asked Focus Group Question 3, which states: "Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide: Outline of 7 Principles, and since there was only one principle, Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, on how you should do pastoral counseling, was this

one of the principles that rose to the top of your learnings when you were being trained? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?" In the paragraph that follows, I will categorize and summarize the one answer to this question that resulted in our Focus Group discussion and share more about each of the five pastors' responses.

In answering this Focus Group question, all five of the pastors agreed that Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process was one of the principles that rose to the top of their learnings when they were being trained. There are eight elements for an effective pastoral counseling process, so the pastors shared which one or two of the elements they especially benefited from learning, and I will share those next. One pastor benefited from Element 2, Maximum of Five One-Hour Sessions, reminding pastors of the number of sessions used to address the one main presenting problem of a counselee; and Element 3, Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements, reminding pastors of the need for the counseling to focus on the congregant's affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements of functioning. The second pastor benefited from Element 7, Pastoral Counseling is Spiritually Focused, reminding pastors to look for ways God is active in the counselee's life and how that person is responding to this, to see show he or she can turn to God for help to address their issue. The third pastor benefited from Element 5, Homework Given Between Sessions, reminding pastors to assign homework to the congregant between sessions to keep the momentum moving forward working on the one main presenting problem; and Element 3, Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements, reminding pastors of the need for the counseling to focus on all three of the congregant's elements of functioning: the affective, cognitive, and behavioral elements. The fourth pastor benefited from

Element 2, Maximum of Five One-Hour Sessions, reminding pastors of the number of sessions used to address the one main presenting problem of a counselee. The fifth pastor benefited from Element 6, Pastoral Counseling is Church based, reminding pastors of utilizing the appropriate support groups of the church to help the counselee address and get help with their one main presenting problem. All five pastors agreed that training on these eight elements to an effective pastoral counseling process was very beneficial to their learning and will help them as they continue to shape their counseling processes to make them more effective.

In summary, all five of the pastors benefited from both the why and how aspects of this training. Even though two of the pastors stated that the one training principle, of the first six that share why pastors should do pastoral counseling, that rose to the top for them was Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling, when we discussed this in our Focus Group, all five pastors agreed this is a very important, if not the most important training principle. To recap, this principle states that pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling because unlike other counseling, during pastoral counseling the pastors connect God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselee's life and experiences. This principle is so important that pastors may begin to value their time more allocated for pastoral counseling, as opposed to some of their other pastoral duties.

Additionally, Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, on how pastors should do pastoral counseling, was one of the principles that rose to the top of all five pastors' learnings during this training, and the five pastors shared which one or two of the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process were most beneficial for their learning. Throughout the two training sessions, all five of the pastors were very engaged in learning and processing the

training content as we went through each of the seven principles, and they asked questions and made comments to further their learning. They also expressed periodically their desires to implement in their pastoral counseling ministry several of the principles they learned for the first time, or were reminded of, in this training. The pastors expressed appreciation for the training on the first six principles on why they need to do pastoral counseling, and once they understood these, they were eager to be trained and on the seventh principle on how to do effective pastoral counseling.

Finding #3: Training Encouraged Counseling Process

The third finding, which was discovered in the pastors' responses to the Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey, and further understood in greater detail during the Focus Group is all five pastors have a pastoral counseling process.[9] See Figure 3 below.

9. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Questions 6 and 7 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Questions 2 and 3 in Appendix F. Individual Responses To Anonymous Post-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 4 in Appendix H. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire And Responses.

FIGURE 3. *Training Encouraged Counseling Process.*[10]

On the Pre-Training Survey, Question 6, it states: "Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list steps on the blanks in the next question.)" In answering this question, three of the pastors responded yes, and two responded no. Additionally, the three pastors who marked yes to Question 6, continued in the Pre-Training Survey, and filled in the steps to their counseling process in Question 7, which states: "If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below."

On the Post-Training Survey, Question 2, it states: "Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list steps on the blanks in the next question.)" In answering this question, three of the pastors responded yes, and still two responded no. Additionally, the three pastors who marked yes to Question 2, continued in the Post-Training Survey, and filled

10. See Appendix G. Explanation Of Figures 1 Through 5.

in the steps to their counseling process in Question 3, which states: “If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.”

After reflecting on still having two pastors mark that they do not have a standard counseling methodology, after reading the results of the Post-Training Survey, I wondered if the pastors had possibly misunderstood what I meant by the term “standard counseling methodology”, even though I had explained to them during the two training sessions that this term refers to your counseling process. Additionally, to reinforce this explanation, I used these two terms interchangeably throughout the two training sessions. So, this thinking led me to write Focus Group Question 4 which states, “If a person came you today for pastoral counseling, share with us what your current pastoral counseling process is, which you would take them through. (*Note: I asked this question to each of the pastors, because after reviewing their Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey results, there may have been some misunderstanding of the term ‘standard counseling methodology’, which I explained during the two training sessions refers to their counseling process, and my goal with this question is to see if they have a pastoral counseling process now after this training. The Pre-Training Survey findings showed three pastors had a standard counseling methodology they used, and two did not have a methodology. The Post-Training Survey findings showed two pastors still do not have a standard counseling methodology, so I wanted to explore this.)* Additionally, I added this follow up question: does having a pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?”

What was discovered during the Focus Group when I asked this question, is all five of the pastors shared how they each now have a pastoral counseling process. Following is a brief

recap of each of their responses. Given there are eight elements for the effective pastoral counseling process, which the five pastors learned about going through this training, the pastors each listed the different elements they have now incorporated into their pastoral counseling process. In each case, at least three of the elements were listed in each of the five pastor's counseling processes. I bolded the key word(s) for each element below, and put in bold and in parentheses which Element number it is, according the eight elements of the Pastoral Counseling Process that is spelled out in Chapter 4. Throughout the training, some pastors expressed appreciation at different times for this training and what they were learning, so, I would not be surprised, if over time, more of the eight elements are added to each of the pastors' counseling processes. Learning and adopting new concepts takes prayer, time, and practice. In the five paragraphs that follow next, each pastor described their counseling process as of today, and some provided other comments too. After this discussion on each pastor's counseling process was complete, I asked the pastors: "does having a pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?" This question and the pastors' responses will follow below, after each of their counseling processes are recapped.

One pastor described his counseling process in this paragraph. He does the initial **intake meeting (Element 1)** and determines the situation, providing sufficient time for the counselee to talk, so he can listen to discern the main problem. Then, to keep the counseling **spiritually focused (Element 7)**, he looks for ways God is active in the congregant's life, and he determines if there are Biblical verses or Biblical principles that help address the counselee's problem which he can discuss with the counselee. He is likely to meet with the counselee an average of **five sessions (Element 2)** over five weeks, but this could be slightly more or less, with sufficient time

built in to determine if the person should be referred on to a professional counselor. His **counseling is structured (Element 4)** as he provides recommendations to the counselee to help with addressing his or her main problem, after he has explored with the congregant, his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. He follows up with counselee no matter what the outcome, i.e., whether he has completed all the pastoral counseling sessions or if her refers the counselee to a professional counselor. He expressed that this training helped him develop a more solidified plan for counseling. He feels motivated to do more counseling because he is more confident in his counseling process.

The second pastor described his counseling process in this paragraph. He does not receive many calls from congregants requesting he counsel them. Most of his counseling comes to him in the spur of the moment, where, for example, a person starts a conversation after a Bible study, and this leads to him counseling this person. He uses appropriate questions to draw out details and discern the main presenting problem as he does the **intake meeting (Element 1)**. He keeps the counseling **spiritually focused (Element 7)** by engaging the counselee in informal and organic spiritual conversations, while looking for ways God is active in the congregant's life, to see how he can help the counselee turn to God for help with the problem. His **counseling is structured (Element 4)** as he does offer suggestions to the counselee to overcome his or her main problem, after he has explored the congregant's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. He does refer counselees to licensed professionals if the issue is too complex for his expertise.

The third pastor described her counseling process in this paragraph. She starts with the **intake meeting (Element 1)** to understand the counselee's problem and to see how her

relationship develops with the counselee. Her counseling is **church based (Element 6)** as she frequently makes referrals to resources within the church, such as mentoring, a Bible Study, or special programs. Her counseling is **explicitly Christian (Element 8)**, where she always includes prayer and listens for the Holy Spirit to help the counselee experience healing and overcome his or her problem. Her **counseling is structured (Element 4)** as each session builds on the previous one and likely becomes more targeted as the sessions unfold. She is reluctant to quantify a specific number of sessions and is more likely to assess progress and perhaps extend time between sessions. Her sessions are likely to run to 90 minutes if good conversation and progress is occurring.

The fourth pastor described his counseling process in this paragraph. Similar to what he heard from the first pastor who shared when answering this question, he allows the counselee to start talking during the **intake meeting (Element 1)** where he assesses and evaluates the potential main problem and the scope of anticipated counseling sessions. He confirms the plan with the counselee and provides parameters for moving forward and plots out a few to **five counseling sessions (Element 2)**. He refers to a licensed professional if the issue is too complex for him. As needed, he assigns **homework between sessions (Element 5)**. When he refers, he continues meeting with counselee while the appropriate counseling resource is found and utilized.

The fifth pastor described his counseling process in this paragraph. The first step in his process is the **intake meeting (Element 1)** where he gets to know the main problem during the first session. Once that is established, he sets up a plan for **5 to 6 counseling sessions (Element 2)**. His **counseling is structured (Element 4)** as each session builds on previous one and he

follows up on analyzing and evaluating to determine progress made in addressing the problem, where he will celebrate successes and identify areas remaining to be addressed. At the sixth or final session, there is discussion regarding the potential need for referral to another resource such as a professional counselor.

In the Focus Group, after each pastor had shared and we discussed each of his or her counseling processes, I asked this follow up question to the pastors again: "does having a pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?" The pastors' response to this follow up question is next. After some discussion, there was a consensus among the five pastors that this training helped structure each of their counseling processes, and the pastors agreed that having a counseling process encourages them to consider doing more counseling. In summary, all five pastors now have a counseling process and having this process in place gives them confidence and encourages them to consider doing more pastoral counseling.

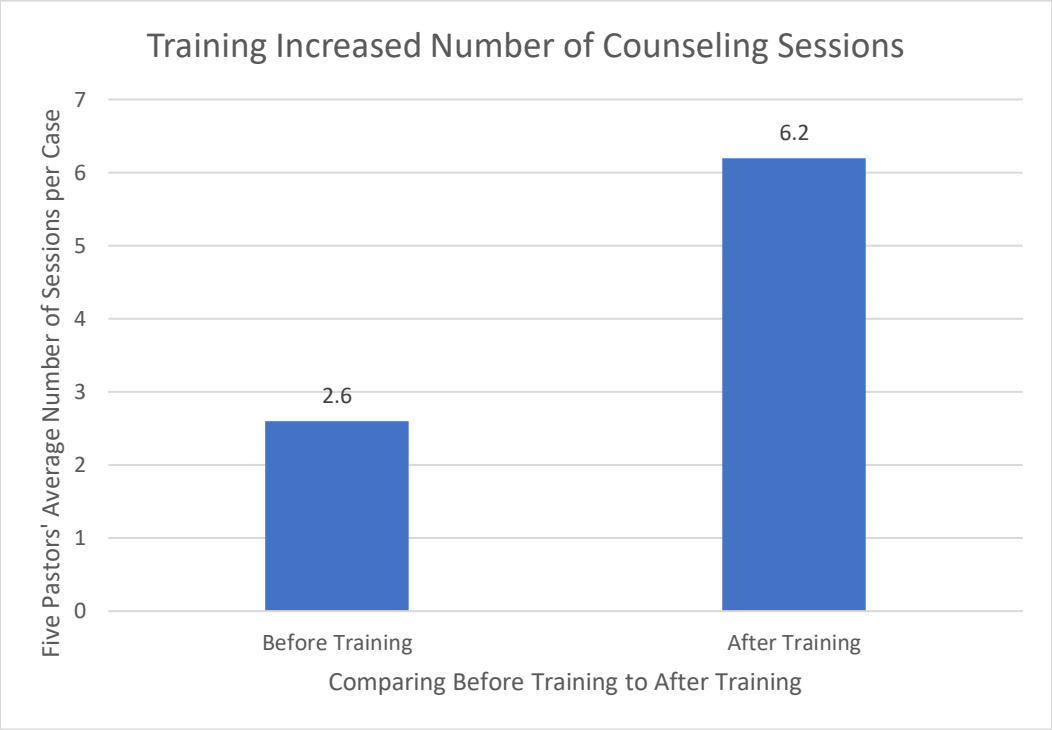
Finding #4: Training Increased Number of Counseling Sessions

The fourth finding, which was discovered in the pastors' responses to the Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey, and further understood in greater detail during the Focus Group is this training encouraged pastors to increase the number of counseling sessions they will use to meet with a congregant addressing his or her one main presenting problem.[11] This

11. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 11 in Appendix E. Individual Responses To Anonymous Pre-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 7 in Appendix F. Individual Responses To Anonymous Post-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Questions 5 and 6 in Appendix H. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire And Responses.

increase in the number of counseling sessions allows more time for the pastor to explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with the presenting problem, as well as, to brainstorm and explore some possible changes in the congregant's life that may help with addressing or coping with his or her problem. See Figure 4 below.

FIGURE 4. *Training Increased Number of Counseling Sessions.*[12]



On the Pre-Training Survey, Question 11, it states: "Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor?" In answering this question, four of the pastors responded by selecting 1 to 3 sessions, and one pastor responded by selecting 4 to 6 sessions. These responses show that before the pastors received this training, the five pastors' average number of sessions per counseling case is 2.6 sessions.

12. See Appendix G. Explanation Of Figures 1 Through 5.

On the Post-Training Survey, Question 7, it states: “Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor?” In answering this question, one of the pastors responded by selecting 1 to 3 sessions, and two pastors responded by selecting 4 to 6 sessions, one of the pastors responded by selecting 7 to 9 sessions, and one pastor responded by selecting more than 9 sessions and this pastor wrote in on the Survey, 10 to 12 sessions. Because this pastor wrote in 10 to 12 sessions, this write-in amount was used in the summary calculations as it more accurately reflects the number of sessions the pastors are doing. These responses show that after the pastors received this training, the five pastors’ average number of sessions per counseling case is 6.2 sessions.

Later, during the Focus Group, the pastors were asked Focus Group Question 5, which states: “During the Pre-Training Survey, four of you five pastors marked you will generally do one to three counseling sessions with a counselee before you refer him to her to a professional counselor, and one of you pastors will do four to six sessions with a counselee and then refer. Before this training, why did you choose this number of sessions?”

In this paragraph is a brief recap of each of the pastors’ responses. One pastor shared that he usually did 1 to 3 sessions of pastoral counseling per case. First, he would obtain details of the problem and did not want to schedule so many sessions that the counselee becomes co-dependent on the pastor. The second pastor shared he generally did 1 to 3 sessions of pastoral counseling per case. He may have referred counselee too quickly not allowing more time to explore thoughts, feelings and behavior associated with the problem and brainstorm possible solutions. The third pastor could not remember the number of sessions she marked on Pre-

Training Survey, but given that the other four pastors expressed that they marked only 1 to 3 sessions, through the process of elimination, it was discerned she marked that she did 4 to 6 sessions before this training. She expressed that she is not comfortable with referring counselees after a very limited number of sessions, unless that is specifically requested, and she is willing to give time, doing more sessions, for issues to be fully revealed. The fourth pastor shared that before this training he was less inclined to meet more than 1 to 3 times, but after this training he may be willing to invest more time in exploring solutions, meeting for 5 or 6 sessions. If he assesses the counselee as not coachable or teachable, then he tries to limit his counseling to 1 session. The fifth pastor shared that he did 1 to 3 sessions because he was not getting problems that warranted more than three sessions. After 1 or 2 sessions, his counselees felt they had what they needed. He never pulled the plug on a counseling situation, but the issues were routinely something that could be resolved in fewer sessions.

Next, during the Focus Group, the pastors were asked Focus Group Question 6, which states: “After the training, the Post-Training Survey data showed one pastor is doing 1 to 3 counseling sessions with a counselee before he or she is referred to a professional counselor, but the rest of the pastors increased their sessions with a counselee, as two of the pastors increased to a maximum of 4 to 6 sessions, one pastor increased to a maximum of 7 to 9 sessions, and one pastor increased to a maximum of 10 to 12 sessions. Explain to us why you choose your current maximum number of sessions with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor.”

In this paragraph is a brief recap of each of the pastor’s responses. One pastor shared this training helped him to see the need to increase the number of sessions he considers

providing so he can explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts and behaviors associated with the problem and explore possible changes in counselee's life that might help address the problem. The second pastor shared he still does 1 to 3 sessions on average. He does provide follow-up with counselees and in some situations has no limitation on number of sessions. The third pastor shared that her strategy on the number of sessions with a counselee has not changed during the training, but she may have responded differently in the surveys, which she did. She marked 4 to 6 sessions before the training on the Pre-Training Survey, as was deduced earlier, and then she shared in the Focus Group that normally the number of sessions is open-ended if progress is being made and could result in as many as 10 to 12 sessions. She also shared in the Focus Group that she wrote in 10 to 12 sessions on the Post-Training Survey, after the training. She may stretch the time between sessions. The fourth pastor shared this training helped him to increase number of sessions to 4 to 6 as he is now willing to invest more time with the counselee and explore possible solutions to the problem. He is more willing to explore a counseling relationship. The fifth pastor shared 4 to 6 sessions is the maximum number of sessions needed to explore the issue more with the counselee, and to brainstorm solutions, although there could be situations where he would go beyond that, if necessary.

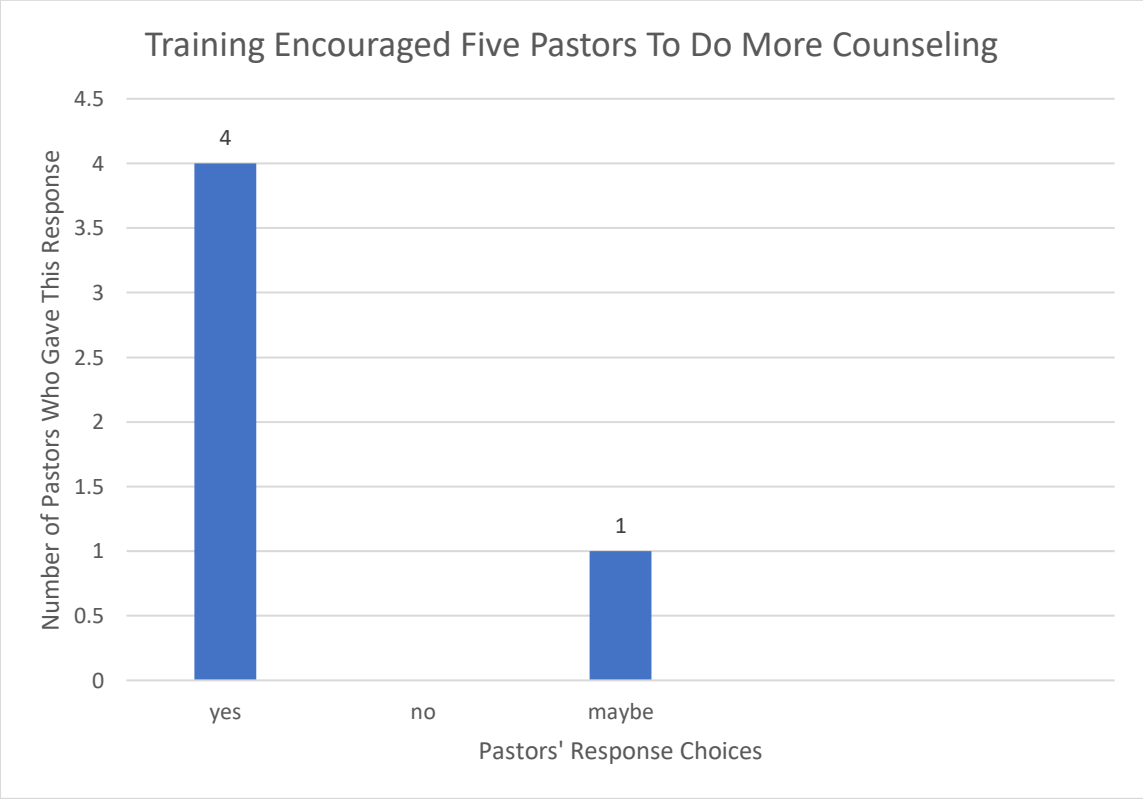
In summary, this training helped increase the number of pastoral counseling sessions from 2.6 to 6.2 per case for a counselee, and one of the main explanations that continued to surface during the Focus Group, which pastors agreed to in general, was these additional sessions give the pastor more time with the congregant to better understand his or her feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with the presenting problem, as well as, to brainstorm and explore some possible changes in the congregant's life that may help with

addressing or coping with his or her problem.

Finding #5: Training Encouraged Five Pastors to do More Counseling

The fifth finding, which was discovered in the pastors' responses to the Post-Training Survey, and further understood in greater detail during the Focus Group is this training encouraged pastors to do more pastoral counseling.[13] See Figure 5 below.

FIGURE 5. *Training Encouraged Five Pastors to do More Counseling.*[14]



On the Post-Training Survey, Question 6, it states: "Will the additional training that you

13. See 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 6 in Appendix F. Individual Responses To Anonymous Post-Training Survey; and see 5 Respondents' Replies to Question 7 in Appendix H. Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire And Responses.

14. See Appendix G. Explanation Of Figures 1 Through 5.

received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?" In answering this question, four of the pastors responded by selecting yes, and one pastor responded by selecting maybe. Later, during the Focus Group, the pastors were asked Focus Group Question 7, which states: "Will this training encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Why?"

This paragraph contains a brief recap of each of the pastors' responses to this Focus Group Question 7. One pastor shared this training added to his body of knowledge on pastoral counseling, which was based upon formal training, observing others, and personal experience. He does feel more motivated to do counseling because he is more confident in his counseling process. This training helped him develop a more solidified plan for counseling. The second pastor shared he will spend more time studying the training materials provided. He feels his pastoral counseling confidence has increased because of this training, and this will motivate him to counsel others. He believes he should spend more time praying for each counselee rather than just listening to his or her problem. He thinks if he can be diligent in prayer for each counselee, things can really change. The third pastor shared she felt this training was great. She felt somewhat inadequate for pastoral counseling when she first graduated from seminary, so it has been her personal and professional goal to read, study, and develop stronger knowledge in this area. This training has helped build her confidence to do more pastoral counseling. The fourth pastor shared this training helped motivate him to be more structured in his counseling sessions which will encourage him to do more counseling as this made counseling seem more doable for him. This training perhaps will result in developing more intentional, discipleship relationships with counselees. The fifth pastor shared this training will encourage him to do

more pastoral counseling as it was a very helpful reminder of his calling and was an equipping tool. He feels not only convicted but he can do more counseling.

In summary, according to the pastors from their discussions in the Focus Group, this training motivated and encouraged them to do more pastoral counseling for several reasons. First, it reminded and convicted them, that part of their calling is to counsel others. Second, it helped them solidify their counseling process. Third, it gave them more counseling knowledge and tools which in turn gave them more confidence and desire to counsel others.

Hypothesis Validation

The hypothesis, which was stated in Chapter 1, was validated through this thesis-project. As a refresher, the hypothesis is stated again, next. The hypothesis is that due to a lack of training, and not having an easy and effective pastoral counseling process, pastors do not feel adequately prepared to do pastoral counseling and therefore, they may not be spending an adequate amount of time providing pastoral counseling to help their congregants. This training thesis-project demonstrates, like it did for the five pastors who went through it, if pastors complete this training, which consists of the first six principles explaining why pastors need to do pastoral counseling, and the seventh principle which teaches how pastors can approach counseling others by examining the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process, their pastoral counseling confidence will most likely increase, and result in their readiness and willingness to do more pastoral counseling. This will help the pastors live more fully into their complete role as a pastor.

Additional Training Needed

As one can discern from reading this thesis-project, the five pastors initially did not have sufficient training on reasons why they need to do pastoral counseling, and they were not equipped with the eight elements of an efficient process to help them know how to do pastoral counseling. This training the five pastors received has motivated and encouraged these pastors to want to do more pastoral counseling. The two training sessions they received for this project were each one hour long and that was sufficient time to cover the material and allow for questions during each session. What may be beneficial in the future is, first, some follow-up training to further process what the pastors learned and ensure that the motivation to do more pastoral counseling, which these five pastors currently possess, is being put into action, by them doing more pastoral counseling. This additional training could be offered quarterly, on a Monday from 11:30am-12:30pm, as each Monday from 11:30am-12:30pm is a time set aside where all the pastors gather to connect and pray for each other and sometimes discuss an issue, so this training could happen in this slot once a quarter. This follow-up training would continue to motivate, educate, encourage, and hold accountable these five pastors to fully engage in the counseling part of his or her pastoral role. Additionally, as a side note, as was mentioned during the Focus Group discussion for Finding #1, educating the congregation on the church's pastoral counseling opportunity, would most likely also stimulate more pastoral counseling. This could be accomplished by working with the pastoral team and developing our team's counseling process and then preach a short series on pastoral counseling and share the pastoral team's counseling process and how congregants can take advantage of this ministry opportunity.

What also may be beneficial in the future is, second, some training on the items the pastors wrote on the Post-Training Survey, Question 8, which states: “In what areas of pastoral counseling would you like additional training?” The responses some of the pastors provided to this question were: should another person be present when a pastor counsels a person of the opposite sex; are there situations when a pastor should refer a counselee who is of the opposite sex; and what are the different counselor therapy philosophies, which understanding these, may help the pastor make effective referrals.

Supplemental Information from the Pre-Training Survey

There was one piece of supplemental information that was captured on the Pre-Training Survey. On this survey, Question 9, states: “Do you refer counselees to professional counselors?”, and Question 10, states, “If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church’s vetted counselor list?” All five pastors marked yes, they refer counselees to professional counselors, and two of the pastors marked no, they do not refer counselees to our church’s vetted counselor list. Future exploration of the five pastor’s responses to Question 10 about the pastors referring counselees to our church’s vetted counselor list may be beneficial.

Conclusion

This training thesis-project helped more fully equip the five pastors with reasons why they need to do pastoral counseling, and how to do pastoral counseling by examining eight

elements of an efficient pastoral counseling process. Given the pastors' enthusiastic and sincere engagement of this training material, one could tell learning occurred. Throughout this training, the pastors made comments and demonstrated motivation and desire to want to implement many of these pastoral counseling training principles in their ministry. This training has motivated and encouraged these five pastors with a desire to do more pastoral counseling so that they can more fully live into the pastoral counseling part of their role.

APPENDIX A

PRE-TRAINING SURVEY

(Administered on June 27, 2022)

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: _____

2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry?

   O less than 1 year
   O 1 year to 5 years
   O 5 years to 10 years
   O 10 years to 20 years
   O longer than 20 years

3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties?

   O yes
   O no

4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties?

   O yes
   O no

5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling?

   O 0 – 5 hours
   O 6 – 10 hours
   O 11 – 20 hours
   O 21 – 30 hours
   O 31 – 40 hours
   O 41 – 50 hours
   O more than 50 hours

6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.)

   O yes
   O no

7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role?

   ○ very much

   ○ somewhat

   ○ neutral

   ○ not much

   ○ Not at all

9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors?

   O yes

   O no

10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list?

O yes

O no

11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor?

O I do not refer

O 1 – 3 sessions

O 4 – 6 sessions

O 7 – 9 sessions

O more than 9 sessions

APPENDIX B

POST-TRAINING SURVEY

(Administered on August 15, 2022 to 4 pastors and on August 25, 2022 to 1 pastor)

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: _____
2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.)

   O yes

   O no

3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role?

   O very much
   O somewhat
   O neutral
   O not much
   O not at all

5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training.

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?

   ○ yes

   ○ no

   ○ maybe

7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor?

   ○ I do not refer

   O 1 – 3 sessions

   O 4 – 6 sessions

   O 7 – 9 sessions

   O more than 9 sessions

8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

TRAINING GUIDE: OUTLINE OF 7 PRINCIPLES

I. Introduction

A. Training goal

The goal of this training is to equip pastors to fully engage congregants in pastoral counseling, as opposed to them not feeling equipped to help others, and they instead avoid counseling, or quickly refer congregants to professional counselors, or do just enough to get by so they can say they are doing pastoral counseling.

B. Training objectives

1. The first objective of this training project is that pastors will receive training on reasons why they need to do pastoral counseling. These reasons are contained in principles one through six. Pastors need to understand and be convicted by scripture, and other reasons, to fully conduct the counseling part of their pastoral care role.

2. The second objective of this training project is that pastors will receive training on how to do pastoral counseling more effectively and efficiently, as they learn the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process.

C. Next step in our training

Scripture calls the elders, which in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, pastors are teaching elders, to have three characteristics which describe a pastor's role. By studying these three characteristics, which describe the pastor's role according to scripture, one can see it is important for pastors to fully conduct the pastoral counseling part of their position.

II. Principle #1: Three Characteristics of an Elder

1 Peter 5:1-4 explains what it means to shepherd the flock of God. This passage gives us three characteristics, which describe the pastor's role. Next, we will look at each of the three characteristics of a pastor from this passage and they are: elders have a relationship with Christ; elders shepherd the flock utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading, caring; and elders please Christ.

A. Elder Has a Relationship with Christ

The first characteristic of an elder is that the elder has a personal and growing relationship with Christ.

1. When Peter calls himself a "fellow elder" in verse 1, it means that Peter is not superior to the elders he is writing to, and he too, like them, is one of those with whom judgement will begin, even though he is an apostle.

2. When Peter states "witness of the sufferings of Christ", both the elders to whom Peter is writing to, and for Peter, is the role of being a witness, who proclaim the sufferings of Christ to the world, and those who give witness to Jesus' sufferings should be prepared to share in those sufferings.

3. When Peter states "partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed", both the elders to whom Peter is writing to, and for Peter, is the role of being a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed, since they have sinned, so they need to repent, and be restored, and they will share with Christ in glory.

B. Elder Shepherds the Flock Utilizing Three Disciplines

The second characteristic of an elder is that the elder shepherds their flock of people utilizing three disciplines—preaching, leading and caring.

Elders are to, according to 1 Peter 5:2, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight. According to R. C. Sproul, "exercising oversight" or "watching over them" comes from the Greek verb, episkopos. We get the word episcopal from that, and this is a bishop, in other words, an overseer, a superintendent one who exercises oversight.

1. Preaching

   Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the first discipline which is preaching.

   Elders are to feed, or preach to, their flock of people, since the food the sheep need is the Word of God applied to their lives.

   Pastors need to make sure their congregation is well fed through the preaching of the whole counsel of the Word of God.

   Preaching involves conveying a message from God and hearers hear God's message and respond to God in faith and obedience.

2. Leading

   Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the second discipline which is leading.

   Elders are leaders of God's people, so they are, "under-shepherds f God the Great Shepherd".

   Congregants need their pastor to be present in their lives so he or she can encourage them and help lead and guide them in God's ways.

3. Caring

   Elders shepherd their flocks of people utilizing the third discipline which is caring.

   An elder is someone who looks out for their flock of people, and assesses what they need, and provides for them.

   The first reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because an important facet of caring for people is counseling them.

   Your effectiveness as a pastoral counselor is more about you ushering people into the healing presence of God, the best counselor of all, than it is about your skillful implementation of counseling techniques.

   When elders shepherd the flock, Peter informs us of three ways they should go about this.

   > First, elders need to shepherd the flock not under compulsion, but willingly, such that elders want to serve and are not doing their role simply out of obligation.
   >
   > Second, elders need to shepherd the flock not for shameful gain, but eagerly, such that elders focus on serving others in the flock and not on being served, and in their serving they guard against shameful gain of power, prestige, and/or acceptance.
   >
   > Third, elders need to shepherd the flock not domineering over those in their charge, but being examples to them, such that elders are to govern in the church not by intimidating others, but by the power of their example, striving to make their life a Godly model to follow.

C. Elder Pleases Christ

The third characteristic of an elder is that the elder has hope and a powerful desire to please Christ.

Elders shepherd the flock willingly and eagerly, and elders will receive the crown of glory when Christ appears during his second coming.

D. Next step in our training

Now we will look at six more principles for why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling with their congregants.

The next principle is people approach pastors for help.

E. Reflections on Principle #1

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

III. Principle #2: People Approach Pastors for Help

A. A second reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because people turn to pastors, more than any other helping profession, to get help for their issues.

1. These statistics demonstrate that in spite of what often seems to be a diminishing sphere of influence for the church in society, a considerably higher percentage of people go to the clergy for help with personal problems than to any other helping profession.

2. Masters and Johnson tell us that 70 percent of all the people who consulted their foundation had at one time or another also consulted a minister about their problem.

B. Next step in our training

The next principle is pastoral counseling helps meet people's needs.

C. Reflections on Principle #2

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

IV. Principle #3**:** Pastoral Counseling Helps Meet People's Needs

A. A third reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because having a well-defined pastoral counseling process containing eight essential elements helps pastors more efficiently and effectively meet people's needs.

B. Next step in our training

The next principle is pastors are experts.

C. Reflections on Principle #3

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

V. Principle #4: Pastors are Experts

A. A fourth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because they are experts, in the counseling they provide, because they can see how the Holy Spirit is at work in a person and knowing this can assist in helping the counselee get the help they need.

B. Ministers are the only counseling professionals who routinely have training in systematic theology, biblical studies, ethics, and church history, and this framework of understanding gives pastoral counselors an invaluable perspective on those seeking their help. What a shame, therefore, when ministers abandon this perspective for a psychological one, judging the latter to be superior or more prestigious.

C. Of course, it is true that a pastor is an inadequate counselor—if he *must* be an expert on emotional problems to be effective. I believe the counselor's task is to look for this *writing of the Spirit* in the counselee's life, rather than concentrating on present or past problems. This is what ministers *are* experts at doing.

D. Next step in our training

The next principle for our training is defining pastoral counseling.

E. Reflections on Principle #4

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

VI. Principle #5: Defining Pastoral Counseling

A. A fifth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because unlike other counseling, during pastoral counseling the pastor connects God, the most powerful healing resource, to the counselee's life and experiences.

B. Next step in our training

The next principle for our training is understanding that pastors need to fulfill their role.

C. Reflections on Principle #5

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

VII. Principle #6: Pastors Need to Fulfill Their Role

A. A sixth reason why pastors need to fully engage in pastoral counseling is because this is an important way to care for people, and caring for people, as we learned earlier when examining 1 Peter 5:1-4, is one of the three main functions of the pastor's role.

B. Next step in our training

The final principle for our training is for pastors to learn the eight elements of an effective pastoral counseling process so pastors can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling.

C. Reflections on Principle #6

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

VIII. Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process

A. This final principle shows pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having the following eight elements included in their pastoral counseling process.

B. Referring Congregants

Pastors need to refer congregants who bring complex issues, for example, working on changing underlying personality structures or resolving deep-seated unconscious problems and conflicts, as pastors are not equipped to help with these issues, but psychotherapists are.

C. Eight Elements of the Pastoral Counseling Process

1. Intake Meeting Where Counselee Describes Problem

This first element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by understanding the counselee's one main presenting problem and setting the boundaries for the counseling relationship by sharing your pastoral counseling process.

The pastor asks a question like: "What brings you in today that you would like to share with me?"

2. Maximum of Five One-hour Sessions

This second element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by addressing the one presenting problem in a brief and time limited manner by having it completed in a maximum of five sessions.

If more than five sessions are needed, then the pastor needs to refer the parishioner to a professional counselor.

3. Holistic Counseling is Responsive to All Three Elements

The third element informs pastors how they can be more effective and complete in their pastoral counseling by having it be holistic as it focuses on the congregant's affective (feeling), cognitive (thought), and behavioral (action) elements of functioning.

4. Counseling is Structured

   The fourth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by structuring the counseling sessions so that each session has a clear focus, and each session builds on the previous one as the pastor addresses the one presenting problem.

   The general structural pattern is during the first three or four sessions, the pastor will explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with their one main presenting problem, as well as brainstorm and explore some possible changes in counselee's life that might help with addressing or coping with his or her presenting problem.

   During the last session or two, the pastor and congregant will discuss the progress they have made in addressing the congregant's presenting problem, and share what remains to be addressed, and decide if a referral is needed.

   They will then bring closure to the counseling relationship at the close of the fifth session.

5. Homework Given Between Sessions

   The fifth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having the counseling be homework-based, as the pastor assigns homework to the congregant between the sessions which helps keep the momentum moving forward as the pastor and the congregant work together on her or his presenting problem.

   Homework assigned by the pastor to help the counselee understand the issues being explored for their one presenting problem can take many forms such as: reading books, the Bible, and/or devotional literature; practicing skills, like expressing emotions; journaling thoughts, feelings, and behaviors basis an experience; and sharing with others what he or she is learning. Other ideas are like what Howard Clinebell states, encouraging the counselee to join a support group of others going through a similar challenge, may help him or her.

   One helpful homework assignment, like David Benner suggests, is having the counselee reflect on the most recent counseling session and come prepared to the next session ready to share what was helpful and what was not, is beneficial to the counseling process as well.

6. Pastoral Counseling is Church based

The sixth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be church-based where the church offers support groups for different issues, for example, addiction, divorce, and job transitions, with which congregants may be struggling, so that those who are undergoing pastoral counseling, will have the opportunity to move into a support group for portions of the help they need.

Another aspect of being church based is having congregants be mentors to the counselees.

It was suggested by David Benner that it may be helpful to connect a congregant in counseling with another person in the church who may be able to provide some of the help the congregant needs, for example, day care, transportation, financial planning, or home repair.

7. Pastoral Counseling is Spiritually Focused

The seventh element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be spiritually-focused, as they look for ways which God is active in the congregant's life and how the congregant is responding to this, to see how he or she can turn to God for help to address the issue.

Some possible spiritual responses toward God about his or her issue might be one of the following: some trust but with a failure to expect much of God; or doubt, anger, confusion, or despair; or God is seen as irrelevant to this issue. The congregant's spiritual response will be discernable to the pastor who is listening closely to the congregant's story.

8. Pastoral Counseling is Explicitly Christian

The eighth element informs pastors how they can be more effective and efficient in their pastoral counseling by having their counseling be explicitly Christian, where the facilitation and interaction are designed to nurture life and heal in and through the Holy Spirit.

Some of the other ways pastoral counseling is made explicitly Christian is by sensitively and wisely using prayer, the sacraments, and Scripture as these

can bring the counselee more closely in touch with God who is the source of all life, growth, and healing.

D. Reflections on Principle #7

I agree_____
_____

I need to do more study on_____
_____

I will implement_____
_____

Comments_____
_____

APPENDIX D

POST-TRAINING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

(Administered on August 22, 2022 to 4 pastors and on August 25, 2022 to 1 pastor)

Post-Training Focus Group Questionnaire
Moderator: Todd Weiland
Recorder: Wanda Duff
Participants: Respondent #1, Respondent #2, Respondent #3, Respondent #4, Respondent #5

Question 1: Why do you spend, on average with the other four pastors surveyed at our church, approximately only 4.6% of your work time doing pastoral counseling?

Question 2: Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training provided, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide, and share which one of the first six training principles, rose to the top for you when you were being trained on principles one through six of why you should do pastoral counseling? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?

Question 3: Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide, and since there was only one principle, Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, on how you should do pastoral counseling, was this one of the principles that rose to the top of your learnings when you were being trained? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?

Questions 4: If a person came you today for pastoral counseling, share with us what your current pastoral counseling process is, which you would take them through. (*Note: I asked this question to each of the pastors, because after reviewing their Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey results, there may have been some misunderstanding of the term "standard counseling methodology", which I explained during the two training sessions refers to their counseling process, and my goal with this question is to see if they have a pastoral counseling process now after this training. The Pre-Training Survey findings showed three pastors had a standard counseling methodology they used, and two did not have a methodology. The Post-Training Survey findings showed two pastors still do not have a standard counseling methodology, so I wanted to explore this.)* Does having a pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?

Question 5: During the Pre-Training Survey, four of you five pastors marked you will generally do 1 to 3 counseling sessions with a counselee before you refer him or her to a

professional counselor, and one of you pastors will do four to six sessions with a counselee and then refer. Before this training, why did you choose this number of sessions?

Question 6: After the training, the Post-Training Survey data showed one pastor is doing 1 to 3 counseling sessions with a counselee before he or she is referred to a professional counselor, but the rest of the pastors increased their sessions with a counselee, as two of the pastors increased to a maximum of 4 to 6 sessions with a counselee, one pastor increased to a maximum of 7 to 9 sessions, and one pastor increased to a maximum of 10 to 12 sessions. Explain to us how you choose your current maximum number of sessions with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor.

Question 7: Will this training encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Why?

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO ANONYMOUS PRE-TRAINING SURVEY

(Administered on June 27, 2022)

Respondent #1:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 4422
2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry? Longer than 20 years
3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties? Yes
4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties? Yes
5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling? 6 – 10 hours
6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.) Yes
7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   I begin with prayer. I then open the discussion by asking, "So tell me what's going on?" As they are talking, I am praying for the Holy Spirit to lead my response and interaction.
8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors? Yes
10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list? Yes
11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 1 – 3 sessions

Respondent #2:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 5413
2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry? Longer than 20 years
3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties? Yes
4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties? Yes
5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling? 6 – 10 hours
6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.) Yes
7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   I pray first. Listen to their situation. Give advice. Refer to counseling professionals if needed.
8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors? Yes
10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list? Yes

11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 1 – 3 sessions

Respondent #3:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 7314
2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry? 1 year to 5 years
3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties? Yes
4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties? Yes
5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling? 6 – 10 hours
6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.) Yes
7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below. These are used as appropriate: Encounter, Engagement, Disengagement (Benner's approach).
8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors? Yes
10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list? Yes, and to some not on our list
11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 4 – 6 sessions

Respondent #4:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 8822
2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry? 1 year to 5 years
3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties? Yes
4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties? Yes
5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling? 0 – 5 hours
6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.) No
7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors? Yes
10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list? No
11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 1 – 3 sessions

Respondent #5:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 1129

2. How many years have you served in ordained pastoral ministry? 5 years to 10 years
3. Do you perform pastoral counseling as part of your regular pastoral duties? Yes
4. Are there other ordained pastors on your church's staff team who perform pastoral counseling as part of their regular pastoral duties? No
5. In an average month, how many hours do you spend doing pastoral counseling? 0 – 5 hours
6. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blank in the next question.) no
7. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
8. How much would you value additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
9. Do you refer counselees to professional counselors? Yes
10. If you do refer counselees to professional counselors, do you refer them to counselors on our church's vetted counselor list? No
11. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 1 – 3 sessions

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO ANONYMOUS POST-TRAINING SURVEY

(Administered on August 15, 2022 to 4 pastors and on August 25, 2022 to 1 pastor)

Respondent #1:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 4422
2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.) no
3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training. 1) # of sessions, 2) lack of training by pastors, 3) the # of people who go to pastors first
6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Yes
7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 4 – 6 sessions
8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training? Counseling the opposite sex like when to refer or have another woman present

Respondent #2:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 5413
2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.) yes
3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   Listen to problem, pray for and with person, scripture on the topic to read and discuss, mention suggestions that might help, have professional pro-Christian counselors to help person, and follow up to see how they are doing.
4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training. Think through my process
6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Yes
7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 1 – 3 sessions
8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training?

Respondent #3:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 7413
2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.) no
3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   My counseling methodology changes depending on the needs of the individual/couple.
4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role?
   Somewhat
5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training. 1. Pastoral counseling is about ushering people into the presence of God. I knew this but loved the reminder and emphasis, 2. Principle 5 goes with the 1st, and also a key principle I appreciated, 3. Principle 5 -element #3 -great reminder to be holistic.
6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Maybe
7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? more than 9 sessions. Most couples can't get the help they need in 5 sessions so I will meet up to 10-12.
8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training? None at this time.

Respondent #4:

1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 8822
2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.) yes
3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   1) Meet with individual or family, 2) Assess if I can help them or need to refer them, 3) Discuss progress, 4) Refer them if needed after 3-5 sessions
4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training. 1) Max of 5 sessions prior to referral (Principle 7), 2) Part of being a pastor is shepherding/caring for the flock, which must include counseling (Principle 1), 3) People seek out pastors first often times (Principle 2)
6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Yes
7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 4 – 6 sessions
8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training? Unsure

Respondent #5:

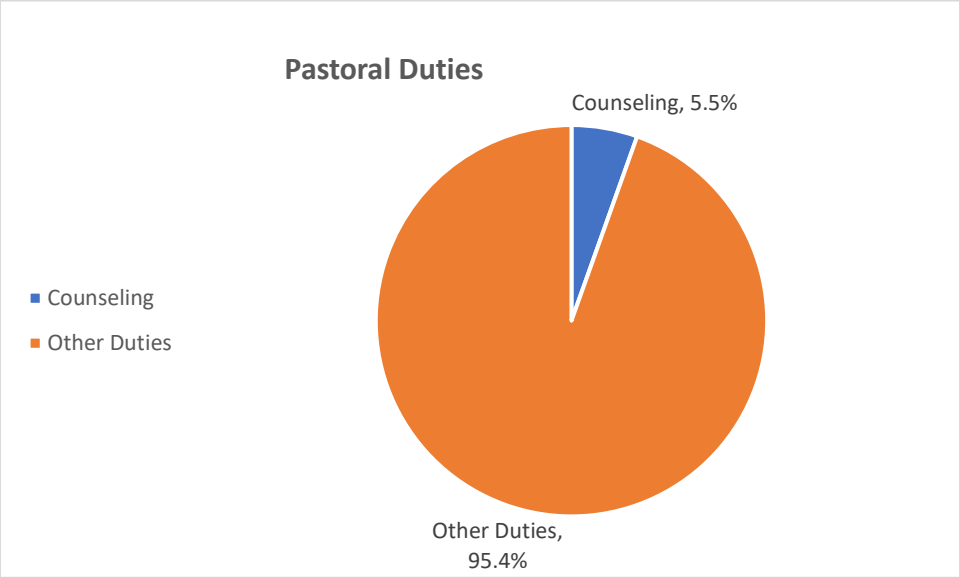
1. Please enter four numbers which you will easily remember here: 1129

2. Do you have a standard counseling methodology? (If so, please list the steps on the blanks in the next question.) yes
3. If you have a standard counseling methodology, please list the steps below.
   I have an initial one on one to identify the problem. I establish a five or six meeting schedule w/homework. At the end evaluate progress and suggest next steps which may include a professional therapist.
4. How much did you benefit from the additional training on an easy and effective pastoral counseling process to equip you for the pastoral counseling part of your role? Very much
5. List the top three principles you gained from the additional training. Principle 1- The Biblical grounding was excellent and convicting. Principle 5 – Remember that it is the connection to God we provide. How #6 – Having counseling be church based. Great reminder of the Church's part in healing.
6. Will the additional training that you received for an easy and effective pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Yes
7. Generally, what is the maximum number of sessions you will have with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor? 7 – 9 sessions
8. In what areas of pastoral counseling, would you like additional training?
   I would like additional training in types of counselors and therapy philosophies so that I can better refer counselees. For example, Christian counselors have different views on Rx's and treatment plans. How do we discern what sort of counseling we are referring the person to?

APPENDIX G

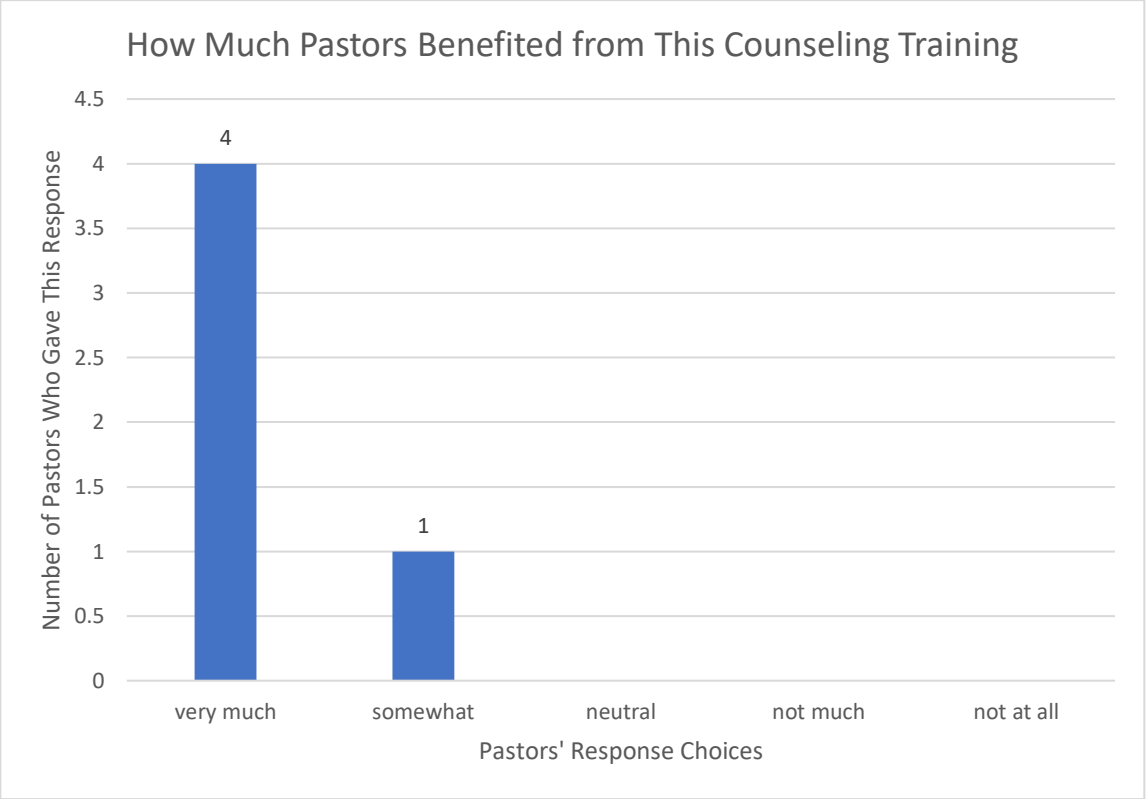
EXPLANATION OF FIGURES 1 THROUGH 5

FIGURE 1. PASTORAL DUTIES



Data for Above Pie Chart: 260 work days in a year divided by 12 months per year equals 21.67 days per month times 8 hours per day equals 173.36 work hours per month. Pastors do pastoral counseling maximum (this is an average of all five pastors) 9.46 hours per month...so 9.46 hours per month (spent doing pastoral counseling) divided by 173.36 hours per month equals 5.5 percent. So, the pie chart has 5.5% of pastors' work time spent doing pastoral counseling and 94.5% of pastors' work time spent doing other pastoral duties.

FIGURE 2. HOW MUCH PASTORS BENEFITED FROM THIS COUNSELING TRAINING



Data for above bar chart:

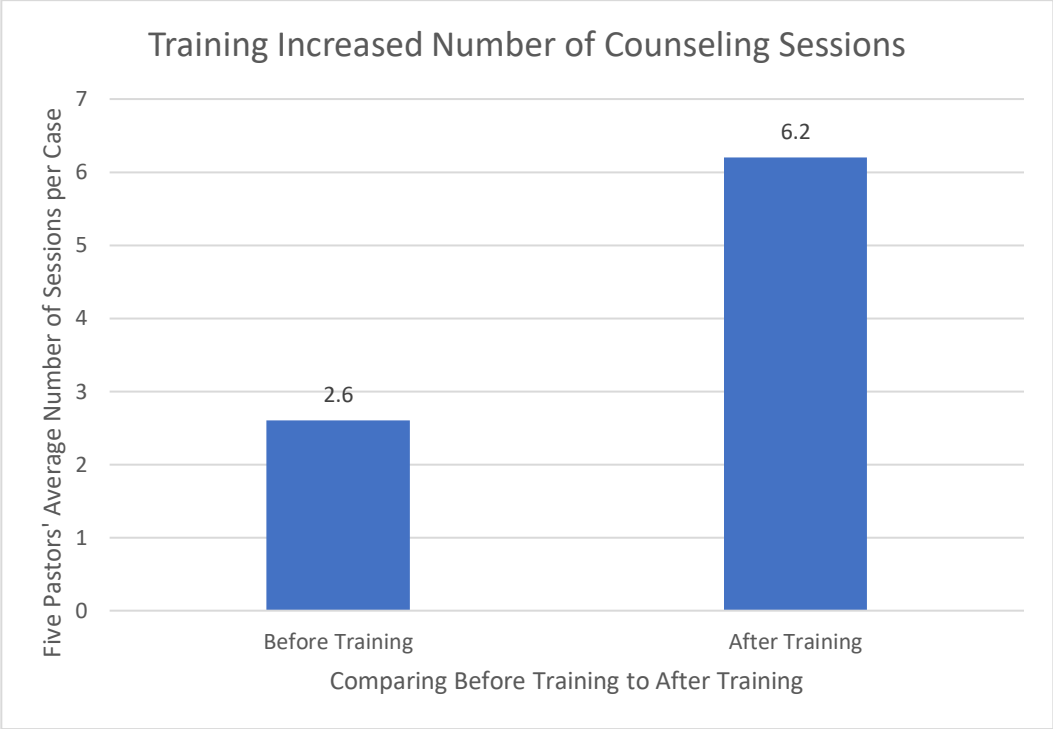
very much	4
Somewhat	1
Neutral	
not much	
not at all	

FIGURE 3. TRAINING ENCOURAGED COUNSELING PROCESS

Data for Above Bar Chart:

Before Training	3
After Training	5

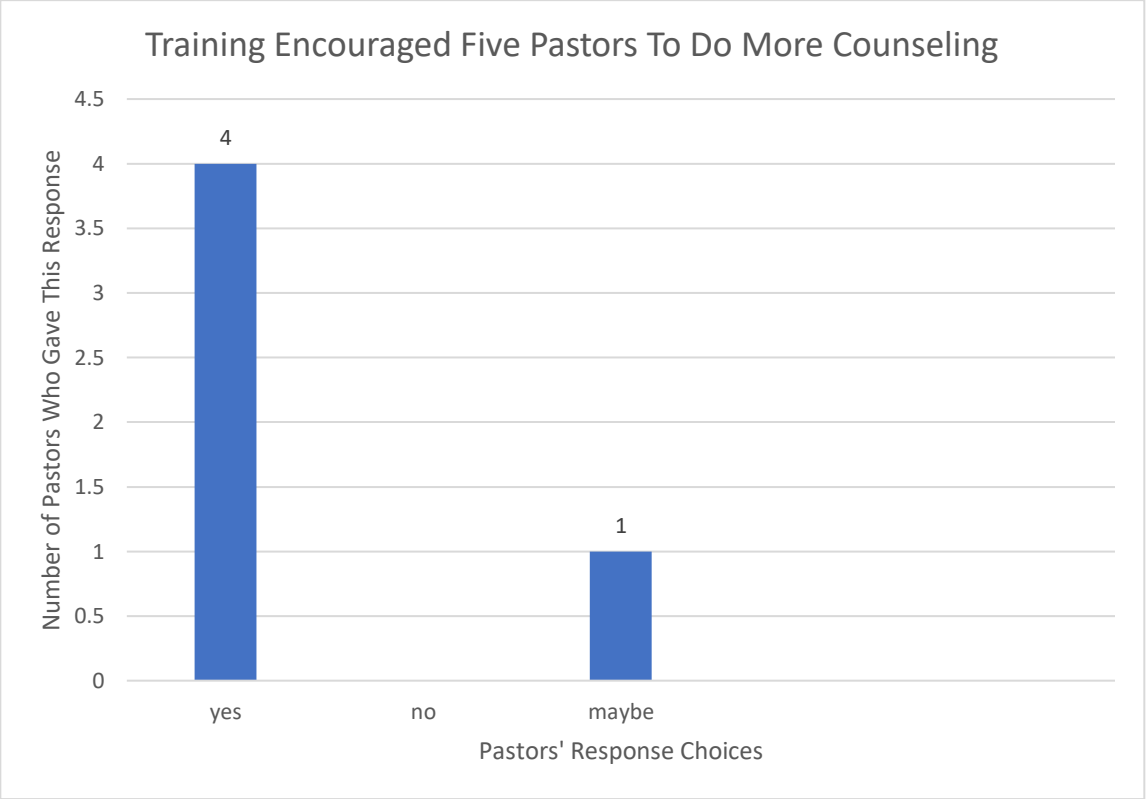
FIGURE 4. TRAINING INCREASED NUMBER OF COUNSELING SESSIONS



Data for Above Bar Chart:

Before Training		2.6
After Training		6.2
Before Training		Average
Response 1	1 to 3	2
Response 2	1 to 3	2
Response 3	1 to 3	2
Response 4	1 to 3	2
Response 5	4 to 6	5
		2.6
After Training		Average
Response 1	1 to 3	2
Response 2	4 to 6	5
Response 3	4 to 6	5
Response 4	7 to 9	8
Response 5	10 to 12	11
		6.2

FIGURE 5. TRAINING ENCOURAGED FIVE PASTORS TO DO MORE COUNSELING



Data for Above Bar Chart:

Yes	4
No	
Maybe	1

APPENDIX H

POST-TRAINING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES

(Administered on August 22, 2022 to 4 pastors and on August 25, 2022 to 1 pastor)

Post-Training Focus Group Interviews
August 22, 2022
Moderator: Todd Weiland
Recorder: Wanda Duff
Participants: Respondent #1, Respondent #2, Respondent #3, Respondent #4
*August 25, 2022 - Additional Participant: Respondent #5 (**Due to scheduling conflict, Respondent #5 had a separate Focus Group on August 25, 2022.*)

Question 1: Why do you spend, on average with the other four pastors surveyed at our church, approximately only 4.6% of your work time doing pastoral counseling?

Respondent #1	Speculated that he may have under-identified the amount of time he spends on counseling weekly; it's likely closer to 10 hours per week. Likely did not include informal and on-the-fly requests for conversation that can come up.
Respondent #2	Responded 'yes' to moderator's question about likelihood of seeing an increase in counseling requests if congregation was more aware of the option to receive that service from staff. Feels many probably do not fully understand the purpose of pastoral counseling and wonders if as a church we have made it known to all that pastors engage with member/non-members in this way.
Respondent #3	Voiced her surprise at the response of an average of only 5%. She personally estimates she spends about 10% of her time in counseling (4-5 hours per week). She tries to meet the needs of any who reach out to her and would likely do more if she had more requests. In response to a question from the moderator, she expects there would be an uptick in requests for counseling care if it was more widely known that pastoral counseling is available through church ministerial staff.
Respondent #4	His response is influenced by the fact that he often refers counselees to outside resources after 2 to 3 meetings. This is especially true when situations or issues exist that he feels are outside his realm of expertise. His interpretation of counseling is restricted and does not include pastoral 'care' which would increase the percentage of time to roughly 30%. Agreed with Respondent #1 that there are informal sessions that occur on the spur of the moment that can result in a type of counseling that may not have been considered when responding to the survey.
*Respondent #5	Did not have many requests for counseling. People need to develop a comfort level with the concept of pastoral counseling and its availability; also, with only two formal classes on counseling in seminary, it's possible that he has

	subconsciously avoided more thorough involvement in an area he perceives could be one of personal weakness.

Question 2: Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training provided, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide, and share which one of the first six training principles, rose to the top for you when you were being trained on principles one through six of why you should do pastoral counseling? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?

Respondent #1	Principle #2 because people tend to seek out pastors more than other Professions
Respondent #2	Principle #3: important to have a process and structure
Respondent #3	Principles #4 and #5: many of her counselees need to 'realign their priorities in light of what scripture says,' 'need Jesus,' need reminder of having Jesus in their lives; with pastoral counseling it is important to provide reminder that if you are a Christian but not living as He calls you to live, that's what is causing the conflict and stress in your life
Respondent #4	Principle #2: enlightening to him that people turn to pastors for help with issues they are having, especially church members who will most likely turn first to their church pastors before anyone else; key is to be available and prioritize that
*Respondent #5	Principles #1 and #5 rose to the top; we are connecting people to God; pastor as connector to God with infinite resources is an enabling reminder of this pastor's purpose; he believes conviction leads to change and being reminded that the counseling act is Biblical and God is present in the counseling environment is important; it's what God desires for this pastor to fulfil his calling, and God's presence in the counseling helps to remove pastor insecurities.

Question 3: Four out of you five pastors stated in your Post-Training Survey that you very much benefited, and one of you somewhat benefited, from this training, and you were to list the top three key learnings you gained. Thank you for sharing those important learnings! Now, please look at your Training Guide, and since there was only one principle, Principle #7: Pastoral Counseling Process, on how you should do pastoral counseling, was this one of the principles that rose to the top of your learnings when you were being trained? How will this principle help you to live more fully into the pastoral counseling part of your role?

Respondent #1	Yes. Agrees with everything Respondent #4 said regarding the 'how' including number of sessions, holistic aspect of counseling

Respondent #2	Yes. #7 (spiritually focused); spiritual responses are critical
Respondent #3	Yes. Found the 'how' very helpful especially the holistic approach; she does push back a little on the limitation on number of sessions feeling that the holistic approach is likely to take more time and she is more likely to consider at least 4 to 5 sessions; caveat is that she feels that homework is critical and is reluctant to continue sessions if counselees aren't willing to do what is requested of them
Respondent #4	Yes. Helpful by providing concrete guidelines for setting boundaries with a counselee, ie. number of sessions (perhaps based upon a pastor's expertise in specific areas); parameters on what a pastor can/cannot counsel on versus referral to an issues expert; limitation on number of sessions especially if pastor feels counselee is not taking the sessions seriously, i.e. failing to complete requested homework assignments
*Respondent #5	Yes. Principle 7 was one of the top on his list and he really responded to the reminder that the counseling is church-based.

Questions 4: If a person came you today for pastoral counseling, share with us what your current pastoral counseling process is, which you would take them through. (*Note: I asked this question to each of the pastors, because after reviewing their Pre-Training Survey and Post-Training Survey results, there may have been some misunderstanding of the term "standard counseling methodology", which I explained during the two training sessions refers to their counseling process, and my goal with this question is to see if they have a pastoral counseling process now after this training. The Pre-Training Survey findings showed three pastors had a standard counseling methodology they used, and two did not have a methodology. The Post-Training Survey findings showed two pastors still do not have a standard counseling methodology, so I wanted to explore this.)* Does having a pastoral counseling process encourage you to do more pastoral counseling?

Respondent #1	Initial meeting (intake); determine the situation with time for them to talk so he can listen to discern the cause/problem initiating the visit; determine if there are Biblical verses or spiritual parallels that he can talk about with the counselee; likely to meet an average of five sessions over five weeks; could be slightly more or less with sufficient time to determine if the person should be referred on to a professional; follow up with counselee no matter what the outcomes, i.e. complete pastoral counseling sessions or referral; additional recommendations if necessary; definitely feels the training helped in confirming structure of his standard counseling process
Respondent #2	Doesn't have many calls to provide counseling specifically; more likely to have a spur of the moment situation where someone starts a conversation after a Bible study or something similar; he uses appropriate language to draw out details and discern the problem; sits down for spiritual conversations with people; most of his interactions are more informal and organic, but he does

	refer to licensed professionals if situations warrant.
Respondent #3	Start with an intake meeting to see how it flows or how the relationship develops; frequently makes referrals to the church body, i.e. resources within the church such as mentoring, Bible study, special programs (church-based support); always includes prayer and listening for the Holy Spirit; likely becomes more structured and targeted as the sessions unfold; she is reluctant to quantify a specific number of sessions; more likely to assess progress and perhaps extend time between sessions as sessions likely to run to 90 minutes if good conversation is occurring
Respondent #4	Similar to what he heard from Respondent #1; let the person start talking and set the agenda (intake meeting); assess/evaluate the potential aspect and scope of anticipated counseling sessions; confirm plan with counselee; provide parameters for moving forward and plan for a few additional sessions (2 to 5); referral to a licensed professional if there is an apparent need; homework or assignments as needed; continued meetings with counselee while the appropriate counseling resource is found
*Respondent #5	Process learned in seminary: The first step in his process is to get to know the issue, and this happens in the first session. Once that is established, he tries to set up a plan for 5 to 6 counseling sessions, including follow up analysis and evaluation, to determine success of his efforts (celebrate successes and identify areas remaining to be addresses). At the 6th or final session, there is discussion regarding the potential need for referral to another resource such as a professional counselor.

Question 5: During the Pre-Training Survey, four of you five pastors marked you will generally do one to three counseling sessions with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor, and one of you pastors will do four to six sessions with a counselee and then refer. Before this training, why did you choose this number of sessions?

Respondent #1	Usually, 1 to 3 sessions but first must obtain details of the true problem; doesn't want to schedule so many sessions that the counselee becomes co-dependent on the pastor.
Respondent #2	1 to 3 sessions generally; may have referred counselee too quickly not allowing more time to explore thoughts, feelings and behavior associated with the problem and brainstorm possible solutions.
Respondent #3	Not comfortable with referring after a very limited number of sessions unless that is specifically requested; willing to give time for issues to be fully revealed.
Respondent #4	Before this training less inclined to meet more than 1 to 3 times; he is cautious not to go outside the scope of his expertise or if the counselee is assessed as not coachable/teachable, i.e. "blame shifters", then he tries to limit to 1 session

*Respondent #5	He did 1 to 3 sessions because he was not getting problems that warranted more than three sessions. After 1 or 2 sessions, his counselees felt they had what they needed. He never pulled the plug on a counseling situation, but the issues were routinely something that could be resolved in fewer sessions.

Question 6: After the training, the Post-Training Survey data showed one pastor is doing 1 to 3 counseling sessions with a counselee before he or she is referred to a professional counselor, but the rest of the pastors increased their sessions with a counselee, as two of the pastors increased to a maximum of 4 to 6 sessions with a counselee, one pastor increased to a maximum of 7 to 9 sessions, and one pastor increased to a maximum of 10 to 12 sessions. Explain to us how you choose your current maximum number of sessions with a counselee before you refer him or her to a professional counselor.

Respondent #1	This training helped him to increase the number of sessions he considers providing so he can explore the congregant's feelings, thoughts and behaviors associated with the problem and explore possible changes in counselee's life that might help address the problem.
Respondent #2	Still 1 to 3 sessions on average-a general rule of thumb although there are exceptions; he has relationships with people he knows and treats that situation as a friendship focusing more on discipleship rather than a counseling session; he does provide follow-up and in some situations has no limitation on number of sessions
Respondent #3	Her strategy hasn't changed since the training, but she may have responded differently; she may stretch the time between sessions with check-in and follow-up; normally number of sessions is open-ended if progress is being made; could be as many as 10 to 12 sessions
Respondent #4	This training helped him to increase number of sessions to 4 to 6 as he is now willing to invest more time with the counselee and explore possible solutions to the problem. He is more willing to explore a counseling relationship.
*Respondent #5	4 to 6 sessions is generally the maximum number of sessions needed to explore the issue more with the counselee, and to brainstorm solutions, although there could be situations where he would go beyond that, if necessary.

Question 7: Will this training encourage you to do more pastoral counseling? Why?

Respondent #1	This training added to his body of knowledge on pastoral counseling which was based upon formal training, observing others, and personal experience. This training helped him develop a more solidified plan for counseling. He feels motivated to do more counseling because he is more confident in his counseling process.
Respondent #2	He will spend more time studying the training materials provided. He feels his pastoral counseling confidence has increased because of this training, and

	this will motivate him to counsel others. He believes he should spend more time praying for people rather than just listening to their problems. He thinks that if he can be diligent in prayer for people, things really can change.
Respondent #3	She felt this training was great. She felt somewhat inadequate for pastoral counseling when she first graduated from seminary, so it has been her personal, professional goal to read, study, and develop stronger knowledge in this area. She felt at a slight deficit in the area of counseling when coming out of seminary, but this training has helped build her confidence to do more pastoral counseling.
Respondent #4	This training helped motivate him to be more structured in his counseling sessions which made counseling more doable for him and this will encourage him to do more counseling. This training perhaps will result in developing more intentional, discipleship relationships with counselees.
*Respondent #5	This training will encourage him to do more pastoral counseling as it was a very helpful reminder of his calling and was an equipping tool. He feels not only convicted but he can do more counseling.

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